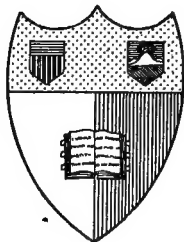


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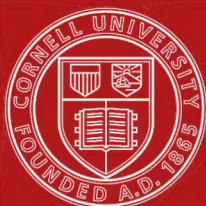
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LABOUR AND INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT IN
1788 TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE COMMONWEALTH IN 1901

BY

T. A. COGHLAN

MEMBRE DE L'INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL DE STATISTIQUE

IN FOUR VOLUMES

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PART VI.—*Continued*

X

TRADE AND FINANCE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

THE people of South Australia had built their expectations of the development of their country on the expansion of agriculture, for which the fertility of the soil and the character of the land seemed peculiarly adapted, on the working of the copper deposits of Yorke Peninsula, and on the colonization of the vast area of the Northern Territory. In all these they were more or less disappointed, and during the period now under review the salvation of the Province came from two sources absolutely unexpected: the discovery of vast mineral deposits in the Broken Hill district of New South Wales which lay close to the South Australian border, and the discovery of gold in Western Australia.

Early in 1873 the discovery of gold was reported in the Northern Territory, and a number of companies were formed in Adelaide to work the deposits, which rumour had greatly magnified. There was much speculation in the shares of these companies and also in those of the copper mines, but little gold was won from the mines of the Northern Territory; and the drop in the price of the metal concerned put an end to the speculation in copper shares.

The harvest of 1873 was extremely poor, but that of the following year was good, and in 1875 the Province had a crop of wheat far exceeding all previous records. These two good harvests greatly encouraged the Government in its policy of internal development, which was not very

much affected by the comparative failure of the crops at the end of 1876, as that was almost compensated for by the price of wheat, which rose rapidly to 5s. 2d. a bushel at the close of 1876, 6s. in January 1877, and 6s. 6d. in the following month. There were abundant rains during 1877, but the wheat harvest at the close of that year did not, on an average, reach 8 bushels to the acre, which was a disappointing yield; nevertheless there was an exportable surplus of about 160,000 tons of flour. The bulk of this export went to Great Britain, and for the first time South Africa became a considerable purchaser.

Although the favourable rainfall of 1877 was not followed by a harvest equal to the anticipations of the farmers, it proved excellent for the pastoralists; there was a large increase of sheep and cattle, and an attempt was made to stock the Northern Territory; the year 1878 therefore opened with some appearance of prosperity. There was more building activity in Adelaide than there had been in any preceding year, and employment was good both in town and country. The Government had in view a programme of public works, consonant to the expansive ideas of the times, but found its path as a borrower somewhat difficult. It had placed a loan of £500,000 in February 1877, and during 1878 it waited for an opportunity to place another for a considerably larger sum. The need was great, but an attempt to place a loan in August miscarried, and the Government decided to carry on by means of overdrafts until the market should prove more favourable. The business of the Government was in the hands of the National Bank of Australasia, and an application for further credit was refused unless an undertaking were given that a loan would be placed early in the following year. The time was very unpropitious. The failure of the Glasgow Bank and other circumstances had produced a serious tightness in the London money market; nevertheless the Government offered for subscription £1,378,000 4 per cent bonds at a minimum price of £88, and obtained only

£1,175,000 at an average price of £88 : 3 : 8. The low price of the issue was warranted neither by the financial position of the Province nor by the price of other colonial securities, as was plainly shown a few weeks later, when the issue stood at £94 : 10s. The operation brought considerable discredit to the Government, but the money obtained did much to relieve the stringency of the South Australian money market, as the Government was able to place about £800,000 on deposit with the local banks.

The lesson of the loan was taken to heart by the Treasurer, who determined to arrange his finances so as not again to be driven to place a loan in such difficult circumstances. He therefore made an arrangement with the associated banks to provide him with £300,000, as might be required between July and November 1879, and a further £500,000 before the ensuing April, when he undertook to place a loan for £2,000,000 should the market prove favourable. Out of the proceeds of the expected loan the Treasurer agreed to place £720,000 with the associated banks in equal proportions. As well as the loans account, the general finances of the Province were in a very unsatisfactory condition ; the expenditure was largely in excess of the revenue, and there was no hope of making good the deficiency except by additional taxation. Accordingly in August 1879 the Treasurer proposed a tax of 6d. in the £ on incomes derived from property and investments, and of 3d. on other incomes, but this moderate proposal was rejected by Parliament.

The harvest of 1878 proved to be scanty owing to the prevalence of red rust. During 1879 the copper-mining industry, which was still one of the mainstays of the Province, was extremely depressed on account of low prices and greatly reduced production, and trade was very bad throughout the whole year. Fortunately the harvest of 1879–80 proved to be excellent, the yield of wheat exceeding 14,250,000 bushels. Moreover, the failure of the crops in England and on the continent of Europe had a very stimulating effect on the market. The year 1880 opened, therefore, with much brighter prospects, and there was a general

revival of trade. The condition of the London money market seemed so satisfactory that the Government resolved to place the whole of the loan issue for which it had parliamentary authority, viz. £3,294,000, and, in spite of its advisers who counselled a low issue price, to make the minimum £92. The loan was offered for subscription on these terms and £15,000,000 was subscribed, the average price realized being £93 : 18s. This successful transaction, coupled with that of the previous year, affords a striking illustration of the vicissitudes of colonial borrowing.

Although the conditions of business during 1880 showed a marked improvement over those of former years, there was nothing in the actual state or prospects of the Province to warrant such expectation of a considerable increase of population or development of industry as to cause a boom. On the contrary, it seemed that agriculture was near its full extension; the pastoral industry seemed indeed capable of expansion, especially in the unknown Northern Territory, but such development was not likely to be on a large scale; while mining was decidedly on the wane. This was not the general opinion, which was inclined to see in South Australia a much neglected country, capable of vast expansion if the fertilizing influence of capital were applied to it. The fertilizer, as was natural, seeing that it was provided by persons who looked for immediate and tangible results, was first applied to the metropolitan area. Several new land and mortgage companies came into existence. Amongst these were the Mortgage Company of South Australia, which was an English company, the South Australian Land Mortgage and Agency Company of £1,000,000 capital, £100,000 of which was reserved for issue locally, and the South Australian Investment Association, also an English company, whose capital amounted to £500,000. These companies all came into existence in 1880, and their competition was immediately felt by the banks, who found their deposits increasing and their advances decreasing in a time of trade

expansion. In August the banks endeavoured to meet the intrusion of the mortgage companies by reducing their rates for discounts and overdrafts, and in December the rates were reduced still further.

The harvest of 1880 was very poor, and this put some check on general business, but money continued abundant, and the reduced discounts did not lead to its absorption. At the annual meetings of banks and other institutions held in April and May the existence of such a plethora of money was deplored, and the speakers in several instances took it upon themselves to point out fields of investment in which the money they were so anxious to lend might be usefully employed.

In July 1880 the Government was able to place two small loan issues totalling £1,370,000 without the intervention of the banks, and at the very high average price of £102 : 19 : 8. Money in Adelaide was more plentiful than ever ; the supply of money for mortgages at 7 or 8 per cent seemed unlimited ; bank discounts were at 6 per cent, and overdrafts 8 per cent, and the rates for deposits were 2 per cent per annum for money fixed for three months, 3 per cent for six months, and 4 per cent for a year. The banks had not long to wait for an answer to their appeals for investors to use their services. Many mining companies were floated, some in Adelaide, and some in London where the assertions of their prospectuses could not be checked ; there was a large amount of speculation in stocks and shares of all kinds, and the land companies were busy pushing business. During the last six months of 1880 the number of public companies floated was truly extraordinary, when regard is paid to the smallness of the population of the Province and the insignificant amount of capital at its disposal. The newspapers bristled with prospectuses of new companies. Among these were one bank, the Town and Country ; several companies, like the Cooper Downs Pastoral Company, formed for the purpose of taking up land not only in South Australia, but in the other colonies also ; many mining companies whose

coming into existence was facilitated by an Act permitting the formation of no-liability mining companies; many ordinary business companies; and, lastly, so-called land and investment companies formed to purchase or lease land in the neighbourhood of Adelaide for the purpose of subdivision and sale with or without improvements. Advertisements of land sales filled column after column of the newspapers. Ten per cent deposit on purchase with credit for the balance extending over from one to three years were the usual terms offered at these sales, and, strange to say, thousands of sales were effected. Within six months of their formation, some of these land companies began to record large profits on their transactions, having sold land at prices which returned them their purchase money several times over. In fact, during 1881 Adelaide presented, on a humbler scale, the same features as were exhibited in Sydney, and later in Melbourne.

The year was marked by drought. The wheat harvest did not yield on an average much more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre, and in some parts of the Province the farmers were dependent on a public subscription for seed for the following season. The bad harvest coming upon the large demand for accommodation during the latter half of 1881 made money dearer. At the middle of 1882 most of the banks had raised their deposit rates, and some of the recently established banks and finance companies were offering 6 per cent for money left with them for three months. The discount for bills at three or four months was 6 and 7 per cent; the rates demanded on mortgages were also advanced, but in the case of good properties with an ample margin money could still be obtained at 7 or 8 per cent. There was, however, no check to land speculation; indeed, it was continued with even greater zest than before, attaining its highest point in September and October 1882. The excitement of buying and selling was prodigious. It was a commonplace to see city and suburban blocks bought at a high price and sold a few months or even weeks later at twice what they had cost.

No one stopped to consider to what beneficial use the city blocks could be put, or who would occupy the suburban sections. The sole idea was to pass on the land at an increased price to other purchasers. It was a merry business while it lasted, and out of it many of the land companies paid large dividends, which sent their shares up to a high premium. Meanwhile other forms of speculation, notably that in mining shares, almost died out and brought ruin to those who were left with stocks and shares on their hands.

The banks were the first to awake to the dangerous excess to which land speculation had been carried, and exerted themselves to restrict accommodation, as well they might, for while their advances and discounts had risen during 1880 from £8,414,000 to £10,812,000 their local deposits had remained almost stationary. New advances were absolutely refused, and this policy was extended even to the Government, which was unable to obtain a small loan for which it had asked. Before the close of the year speculation of all kinds came to an abrupt end. During 1882 the imports of the Province had been increased by about £1,500,000. The merchants had placed heavy orders in England during the early part of the year, in anticipation of the boom being long-lived, and at the end they were saddled with heavy stocks which were quite unsaleable. The harvest prospects were bad, and, look where they would, the business community could find nothing from which to expect an alleviation of the tightness of the money market or a relief of the general depression. A rigid economy now began to appear in the expenditure of the community, and it seemed to be universally recognized that the apparent prosperity and easy money of the preceding years were directly due to an inflow of borrowed money, which had now ceased, and which, for the most part, had brought no permanent gain to the country.

The difficulties which South Australia experienced at the close of 1882 were not peculiar to it, but were common

to all the eastern colonies of Australia, owing to the close interconnexion of the banks; but this fact made the position more difficult for the Province, as it was hopeless to expect relief from Melbourne or Sydney. During the early months of 1883 the banks kept a very close watch on their advances; in May some of them raised the rates for overdrafts to 10 per cent, and the mortgage companies refused to lend money, however good the security, at less than 10 per cent. The rate for deposits, fixed for three or six months, was, as a rule, 6 per cent, but some of the newly established banks paid $\frac{1}{2}$ and even 1 per cent more. The harvest had proved as bad as was anticipated, and many of the small farmers were completely ruined, being unable to face three bad seasons in succession. The price of copper was lower than it had been, and even the richest mines barely paid their expenses. In these conditions it could not be expected that business would be otherwise than stagnant. Some expectation was raised that the placing of a loan in England by the Government might give relief to the money market, and in October 1883 a loan was placed, but the sum raised was only £1,456,000. About half of this amount went at once in repayment of advances, and the balance was needed to meet commitments then existing, so that the operation gave very little ease to the market.

At the close of 1883 it was certain that the new harvest would be larger than ever gathered before in the Province. The yield proved to be nearly 15,000,000 bushels, but as there was no scarcity of grain, either in Australia or Europe, prices in Adelaide fell to 3s. 6d. a bushel. This was a disappointing price for the farmers, who, as a rule, at first refused to sell, hoping for a satisfactory change in the markets, which, however, did not come. The banking position at the beginning of 1884 was one of much difficulty. The surplus wheat had to be carried to England for sale as there was no Australian market for it. The banks were so short of gold that some of them actually shipped gold from London to Adelaide, and the exchange

on London [fell] suddenly to $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent discount ; in these circumstances the banks manifested great reluctance to finance the wheat harvest and make advances against grain shipments. They had between them imported £4,000,000 of capital from England during 1882 and 1883, financing the operations involved by means of the extensive imports of these years, and now they were experiencing the difficulty of getting back to normal trade conditions. All the banks proceeded to strengthen their reserves, and many of them to demand the immediate repayment by farmers of the advances made them during 1882 and 1883. The farmers conceived this to be a double hardship because, to meet their indebtedness, they were compelled to sell their grain, whereas they desired to hold it, and the difficulties raised by the banks in financing grain shipments tended to depress prices rather seriously.

The year 1884 opened with very dull prospects for South Australian interests. The banks had little money to spare, and some of them, for instance the Commercial Bank of South Australia, sought to strengthen their resources by obtaining money in London. The land companies would have tried that expedient also, but their shares had fallen very considerably ; some of them were obliged to make calls on their shareholders, and it was impossible for them to make a sufficiently good appearance to tempt the London investor. The income of many of these companies fell short of their expenses, as land was unsaleable and they were paying heavy interest on their borrowings from the banks. The general position was made worse by the failure of the Oriental Bank in May 1884. The bank, it is true, had no important interests in South Australia, but its failure brought about a feeling of alarm, which was not set at rest until very reassuring statements had been made at the annual meetings of the local banks, held later in the same month.

On 20th May the Government floated a loan in London for £1,651,300. The greater part of the money thus obtained was needed in London, but the Treasurer was able to place

£720,000 on deposit with the Adelaide banks, for which he accepted 4 per cent, although at the time the general deposit rate for any period above three months was 6 per cent. The possession of this money enabled the banks to reduce their deposit rates in August to 4, 5, and 6 per cent per annum, according as the money was fixed for three, six, or twelve months, and discount rates were also reduced.

When Parliament met in June 1884, after a General Election, there was a change of Ministry, and Colton became Premier. The new Government proposed a tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound on the unimproved capital value of land, and an income tax of 6d. in the pound on incomes derived from investments, and 3d. on those derived from business or professions, with an exemption of £300 on all incomes. By these means the Treasurer hoped to obtain a revenue of slightly over £200,000 a year. This was an egregious over-estimate, but the taxes became law, Parliament accepting them on account of the gravity of the financial situation, as the deficit on revenue account was now approaching £500,000. They were, however, extremely distasteful to the general public, and brought about an active recrudescence of Protectionism, a high tariff being put forward as the proper remedy for revenue difficulties and trade depression.

There was another good harvest at the end of 1884, and although the average price obtained for wheat was only 3s. 6d. per bushel, the farmers as a whole did very well. There was a large increase in the deposits of both the ordinary banks and the savings banks, but there was no revival in business and no return of confidence. In Adelaide there was great depression, and in Yorke Peninsula much distress amongst the mining population, as many mines were shut down, and where they remained employed the miners were forced to accept reduced wages.

At the beginning of 1885 South Australia began to lose population, and this fact increased the demand for protective duties as the only means of raising the Province

from its condition of depression. Money, however, was once more plentiful as the banks were again obtaining supplies from London, and in April the deposit rates were generally reduced to 3, 4, and 5 per cent per annum, which were those paid in Melbourne and Sydney, but some of the banks still paid the highest of these rates for deposits fixed for three months. The apparent abundance of money induced the land companies to attempt to galvanize the land market into life again, but they failed to sell any land, and presently gave up the attempt.

Although the Government was in possession of fairly large sums from previous loans, it placed another loan in June 1885, obtaining £1,560,400 at 4 per cent; and, the money not being required immediately, owing to the curtailment of public works, the Treasurer deposited a large sum with the banks, for which he obtained $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Meanwhile the revenue deficit was steadily mounting up and had reached £700,000. On 11th June 1885 the Colton Ministry was defeated, and Downer became Premier. The first business of the new Government was to attend to the finances, and the Treasurer laid before Parliament proposals for the imposition of probate, succession, and stamp duties, and for a considerable increase in the tariff. The stamp duties found little favour and were not persisted in, but the other financial proposals of the Government were adopted. The tariff placed heavy specific duties on certain articles, raised the duties on others to 15 per cent *ad valorem*, and fixed the general tariff rate on all other goods not included in the free list at 10 per cent. This tariff aimed simultaneously at revenue and protection, and was accepted on account of the urgent necessity of obtaining more revenue; but it was not palatable either to Free Traders or to Protectionists, and both parties prepared to contest the next election on the question of the tariff.

As the year advanced money available for investment accumulated, and in September 1885 the bank deposits were larger by £850,000 than in the previous year. But

wool had declined in price, wheat continued low, and copper was still hopeless. Trade showed no sign of revival, and in view of the continual drain of population from Adelaide to the neighbouring colonies, which were still enjoying a flood-tide of prosperity, land was absolutely unsaleable. The prevalence of unemployment led as usual to an urgent demand for increased public works, and to this was added the clamour of the farmers for irrigation works.

The harvest of 1885 was almost a complete failure; mining had come very nearly to a standstill, as copper at Wallaroo had fallen to £49 a ton; and mining shares were all but unsaleable, so little confidence was there in the future of the industry. At the end of the year the trade outlook was particularly gloomy, and merchants greatly restricted their orders for the ensuing year. Early in 1886 the lack of confidence extended to bank shares, and all those quoted in Adelaide declined in price. This arose out of rumours current concerning the Commercial Bank of South Australia, and their justification was apparent when the bank closed its doors on 24th February.

The difficulties of the Commercial Bank of South Australia were caused by the imprudence and dishonesty of the manager, who had advanced large sums of money on speculative accounts, in some of which he was himself concerned, and he and the chief accountant were convicted subsequently of embezzlement and sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. The directors of the bank had been kept in complete ignorance of the existence of many large overdrafts, although such ignorance would have been impossible if they had exercised proper care in the discharge of their duties. When at last they became aware of the position, they tried to induce the Commercial Bank of Australia to take over the business, but the offer was declined, and an appeal to the associated banks of South Australia was without success. For a month or so various attempts were made to amalgamate the business of the bank with that of some other institution and thus

avoid liquidation, but none was willing to take the risk which such amalgamation involved; a proposal to obtain fresh capital and reopen the bank was discussed but abandoned as impracticable. The capital of the bank consisted of 100,000 £5 shares, on which £4 had been paid, the liabilities were £1,107,000, and the nominal assets £1,536,000, but there were admitted losses to the extent of £325,000, so that the available assets were at most £1,211,000. It appeared that there would be enough to meet the claims of the noteholders and depositors if the assets reached their estimated value, but the whole of the shareholders' capital had disappeared. The bank was a purely local institution with local shareholders and no considerable deposits except in South Australia and London, and its fall had a disastrous effect on business. The associated banks at once declared their intention of supporting each other in case of panic, and this had a somewhat reassuring effect, though all bank shares fell in price.

The liquidation of the Commercial Bank of South Australia was a matter of great difficulty and fraught with disaster to many innocent persons, but, as subsequent events showed, was unavoidable. Many insolvencies followed, some directly due to the failure of the bank, others brought about by the lack of confidence which the failure engendered throughout the Province. In spite of the declaration of the banks in regard to mutual support the money market was for a time completely unsettled, deposits were moved from bank to bank, and suspicion attached needlessly to many financial institutions. The banks, as a rule, cut down their dividends, and several of them made special provision in their balance-sheets for doubtful debts, a proceeding which, in the circumstances, had an effect opposite to what was expected. The Town and Country Bank, upon which suspicion had particularly fastened itself, wiped out all its reserve funds in this way, but lost the confidence of the public, and was compelled to go into liquidation about a year later. Rumour assailed even the Savings Bank, with stories of losses on mortgage

securities, and on 13th April 1886 there was a run upon the bank, especially by the smaller depositors, in spite of the fact that the Government was behind it. The bank gave special facilities for the repayment of its deposits, and after the run had continued two days the common sense of the public recovered its sway, the rush ceased, and the depositors brought their money back again. The run for deposits extended very naturally to the deposit companies dealing in land, and several of these, as well as many land syndicates, which had been holding out in the hope of an improvement in the real property market, were obliged to call their creditors together to ask for extension of time to meet their obligations, or to admit their insolvency and arrange for their liquidation.

In London the failure of the Commercial Bank of South Australia had little effect on the public or private credit of the Province; nevertheless the Government, again in urgent need of money to carry on its public works, thought it prudent to postpone the issue of a loan arranged for February until the end of April. When the loan was at last offered there were some unfavourable comments in the press and a decline in the price of other South Australian stocks; but the amount asked for, £1,332,000, was over-subscribed at an average of £99 : 9 : 6, which was a good price for a 4 per cent stock, and showed that what had occurred had not shaken the faith of the London investors.

In South Australia itself confidence was at its lowest. There had been a good deal of emigration from the Province during 1885, and this was largely increased during the early months of the following year. In Adelaide rows of houses stood empty, rents dropped 25 per cent in a few weeks, the prices of shares of South Australian companies, especially mining concerns, fell enormously, and all forms of speculation were dead. Affairs remained in this condition for several months, when the whole aspect of business was changed during the course of a few weeks, as if by magic. About the middle of 1886 the price of wheat rose to 5s. 2d.

per bushel (it had been 3s. 6d. previously); at the beginning of August the drought under which the Province had suffered so long began to break up, and about the same time there was an increase of 15 per cent in the price of wool at the London sales. These were important factors in the well-being of the Province, and the improvement was enhanced by the discovery in October of a good alluvial goldfield at Teetulpa, easily accessible by rail from Adelaide; on which in a month about 2000 men were at work. The output of gold was not extraordinarily large, but Teetulpa was the first payable alluvial field found in South Australia. Its discovery was most opportune, as it gave fresh courage to the mass of the people and provided a hopeful outlet for surplus labour; to this was added the brilliant prospects of the Broken Hill silver mines in which South Australia was vitally interested. This fortunate combination produced an entire change in the mental atmosphere of the Province, and there was a general feeling that the worst of the depression had been surmounted.

The harvest at the close of 1886 was above the average, and the prospects of the next season seemed so good that an increased area was put under crop. Copper-mining, which had languished so long, received a marked impetus, as the formation of the *Société des Metaux* in Europe led at once to a rise in the price of copper. Although the producers of South Australia had no direct dealings with the ring, they none the less reaped benefit from its operations. The permanence of the Broken Hill mining-field was now so well established that the South Australian Government decided to extend its railways right up to the New South Wales border, and so give facilities for trading with the mines. This amounted to a virtual annexation of the district by South Australia, and during December 1887, shortly after its completion, the Adelaide and Cockburn railway line carried 6100 tons of goods. Large quantities of ore passed from the mines to Port Pirie, and goods of all kinds were sent up from Adelaide to the mining townships. In addition to this great trading

advantage to the Province, the mines provided an excellent and much-needed outlet for its surplus labour.

The weather conditions of 1887 were highly favourable to all rural industries. The pastoral industry revived, and the harvest of the year outstripped all previous records, the wheat crop exceeding 19,000,000 bushels. In these favourable circumstances there was a great revival in general trade, and the exodus of population was checked.

The output of the silver and lead mines of Broken Hill during 1887 was valued at £574,000, and so rapid was their development that this was doubled during the following year. This increase had been anticipated, and towards the end of 1887 there was a wild outburst of speculation, which, beginning in Melbourne, soon reached Adelaide. All classes took part in this speculation, and the extent to which persons of very limited means joined in, may be inferred from the fact that the Savings Bank deposits actually declined at the end of 1887 and during the first three months of 1888. Nor was speculation confined to the well-known and highly productive Broken Hill mines. During the early part of 1888 large numbers of gold, silver, copper, tin, ruby, and diamond mines were floated in South Australia. Many of these companies had very little capital, often not more than £2000 to £5000. Shares in most of them were taken up with great eagerness, and companies which could show no results whatever were able to sell shares at high premiums. From one very objectionable feature of this speculative period, as it exhibited itself in the three eastern colonies, South Australia was practically free. The banks did not make advances against mining securities at speculative values. They had not had time to forget the anxieties of 1886; speculation was confined within more reasonable limits, and its effects were less serious in Adelaide than in Melbourne, Sydney, or Brisbane.

The activity of the share market in Adelaide continued during the second quarter of 1888, but mining speculation was much reduced. In the latter half of the year there

was a very great change both in the investment and speculative markets. The country was again suffering from drought ; investment was checked, and speculation almost disappeared. The harvest of 1888 was one of the worst known in the Province ; on many thousand acres the seed did not sprout ; on more than 400,000 acres no crops were reaped, and of the rest 300,000 acres yielded to the farmers less than 2 bushels to the acre, the average for the whole country being only 3·1 bushels. The drought broke up in January 1889 in heavy and extensive rains, a mockery to the farmers, but of great benefit to the pastoralists, whose flocks and herds had been decimated during the spring and early summer.

In April 1888 the Moonta copper-mines had paid a dividend for the first time after a long interval, and this had stimulated the demand for copper shares, but in March 1889 the collapse of the Société des Metaux brought down the price of copper in a few days from £78 to £55 per ton, and before the close of the month to £35. Following so closely the destruction of the harvest, this was a great blow to the Province, and the first half of 1889 was a period of very considerable depression. During the second half of the year there were great developments in the Barrier district, fresh finds were continually reported, and speculation in the best-known silver shares became extremely active, quite eclipsing any other business on the Stock Exchange. The shares in the Proprietary Mine, which had been subdivided, stood at £50 on 2nd September 1889, representing £500 for each original share, by the end of the month they had reached £60, and on 25th October £75. Less sensational advances had also taken place in the prices of other silver shares. The strike which occurred at Broken Hill in November 1889 caused a slight decline in the market, which was followed, when the strike came to an end, by an immense inflation, the shares of Broken Hill Proprietary rising to £93. In December, however, there was a sudden change, almost a panic. In a few days Broken Hills fell to £76, and shares in Block 14, the

British, Block 10, and Junction mines fell 20 per cent, but the panic passed off as suddenly as it had arisen, and in a few days prices were nearly as high as before it occurred.

There had been a great deal of rain during 1889, which had been favourable to mining as well as to the farming industry. At the end of the year there was a fairly good harvest, yielding 14,500,000 bushels of wheat, and the year 1890 opened with excellent prospects and a general feeling of optimism. In January this feeling exhibited itself in an increased demand for silver shares, but in February there was a heavy decline in the price of these shares without any recovery. The majority of the South Australian investors and speculators had, however, taken their profits, and the boom was the means of adding a large amount of capital to the Province. Taking 1890 as a whole, the year was fairly prosperous. Population began to flow back to Adelaide, the property market was recovering its tone, and there were indications that building operations would be resumed. These favourable conditions were interfered with by the great strike, but not seriously, until the Broken Hill miners decided to stop work. Fortunately the differences between the miners and the companies were soon adjusted, and when the strike eventually collapsed it was found that the great industries of the Province had, on the whole, suffered little injury.

The harvest of 1890, although yielding an average crop, was much below that of the previous year, but as prices were higher, the farmers on the whole did not fare badly. As the year advanced the outlook for the next season did not promise well, and the area sown was considerably reduced. The dry weather also affected the pastoral industry, which suffered at the same time from a heavy fall in the price of wool and other products. The Government had reduced its loan expenditure during 1890, but, seeing the possibility of a large amount of unemployment if expenditure were reduced any more, it decided upon further borrowing, and in February 1891 the Treasurer asked the London market for a loan of £1,500,000, of

which only about one-third was subscribed. The money required was procured subsequently, but the event created a very uneasy feeling in Adelaide, which was greatly increased later in the year by the succession of suspensions amongst land and building companies operating in Melbourne and Sydney. In October it was realized the harvest would be poor and, what was nearly as important to South Australia, that there would, on account of the dry weather, be a large falling off in production and employment at Broken Hill. In the circumstances all inclination for speculation disappeared, and business enterprise was everywhere curtailed.

Early in 1892 the Bank of South Australia found itself unable to carry on business. The bank was the oldest in the Province, and in the early days of settlement had been most largely identified with its progress. The Union Bank arranged to take over the business and liquidate the assets of the bank, so that the blow was somewhat softened. It was a blow, nevertheless, which brought ruin to many homes.

The year 1892 was one of low prices for all the principal products of Australian industry, particularly wheat, wool, copper, and silver, the articles in which South Australia was most largely interested; and, in the case of wool, the Province did not, like some of its neighbours, obtain compensation for low prices by a larger output. Money accumulated in the banks, there was no business enterprise, no way in which money could be usefully employed, and although there was less actual apprehension than in the eastern colonies, there was sufficient to unnerve trade. The harvest of 1892 was fair, and the early wool sales showed an advance in prices equal to about 7 per cent. The hopes built upon a large return from the harvest disappeared when the returns from the other states became known, for both in Victoria and in New South Wales the crops were plentiful, and as Great Britain was also well supplied, wheat at Port Adelaide dropped to 3s. or 3s. 2d. per bushel, an unremunerative price,

except in certain favoured districts of the Province. Copper had not recovered from the slump following the disappearance of the Société des Metaux, and at £46 per ton it scarcely paid to keep the mines open. Silver at 3s. 2d. per ounce meant a change in the working of the Broken Hill mines and possibly the closing down of some of them. South Australia was therefore not well prepared for the shocks that were about to follow.

On 20th January 1893 the suspension of the Federal Bank was announced. The assets of the bank in South Australia amounted to £316,000 and its liabilities to £171,000, including a note circulation of £14,000. As both in Victoria, where the head office of the bank was situated, and in South Australia bank-notes were a first charge on the assets of a bank, no alarm was felt about the note issue, especially as the other banks continued to accept them at their face value. It chanced that there were very few shareholders of the Federal Bank in the Province, and though the failure was not without its inconvenience, it was not a great blow to business. On 30th January Elder, Smith & Company, an important local firm, announced that it would pay no dividend, as very serious losses had been incurred. The amount at stake was no great matter, but the company symbolized all that was sound and progressive in the country, and its failure to pay its usual dividend gave the commercial community a far greater shock than the suspension of the Federal Bank. The Commercial Bank of Australia, which failed at the beginning of April 1893, had had branches in the Province for eight years, and held deposits to the amount of £388,000. There had been no run on this bank in South Australia, and its failure was accepted very quietly; all the same, bank stocks became unsaleable in Adelaide, and Broken Hill shares, now again subdivided, fell from £7 : 12s. to £2 : 18s. The next suspension, that of the English, Scottish, and Australian Chartered Bank, was a more serious matter, as the South Australian deposits amounted to £797,000, distributed over numerous country

branches, wherein a great many farmers, storekeepers, and small traders had their accounts. There had been an unimportant run on the Adelaide office, prompted by what was happening in Melbourne, but there was nothing in the South Australian business of the bank to call for anxiety. The Adelaide branch and a few other branches were immediately reopened for trust accounts, but most of the country branches remained closed until the bank's reconstruction. On 1st May 1893 the National Bank of Australasia suspended payment. The head office of the bank was in Melbourne, but there were seven hundred shareholders on the Adelaide register, and the South Australian business formed a most important part of the bank's operations. At the end of March 1893 its deposits within the Province amounted to £1,734,494 and its note circulation to £130,639. In the middle of April the bank had declared a dividend, but such was the nervous condition to which the depositors in almost all the banks had now been brought that, in spite of this declaration of dividend, which was genuinely made, about £175,000 of deposits were withdrawn during the same month. The failure of the National Bank made a great impression in Adelaide, and for a few days afterwards much uneasiness was exhibited by the depositors in all the remaining banks, even the Government Savings Bank not escaping suspicion. For a while all transactions of an important character, as well as all wholesale business, were suspended. Out of 122 branches of banks established outside Adelaide, 46 remained open; the rest were closed, or were doing business in trust accounts only. Fortunately this was the whole tale of banking suspensions in South Australia. There remained standing the Bank of Adelaide, the Bank of New South Wales, the Bank of Australasia, the Union Bank, and the Bank of New Zealand.

XI

TRADE AND FINANCE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA

WHEN this period opened, Western Australia was enjoying fair prosperity under the efficient and stimulating control of Governor Weld. It was, however, a very small community, and in many respects very primitive in its character. In 1873 the population numbered 25,700 and, as this population was scattered over a very considerable area, it was impossible for the Government to provide easy means of communication. No railway was in existence. The imports to the colony amounted in value to about £300,000 and included many articles of food, such as wheat and potatoes, in which it might have been supposed the colony would have been self-sufficing. The exports were steadily growing, and consisted of various kinds of raw materials; wool represented half the value of the exports, sandalwood, timber, pearls and pearl shells forming the greater part of the balance.

Between 1873 and 1880 small sums were borrowed in London for the construction of public works. The money so obtained was used prudently and reacted beneficially on the trade of the colony. Amongst other works carried out was the railway from Geraldton to Northampton, undertaken in order to enable the lead-mines at the latter place to be developed; and for some years lead was an important export.

Trade grew steadily, and in 1878 the Union Bank of Australia opened a branch in Perth, thus making the

third bank doing business in the colony, the others being the Western Australian Bank founded in 1841 and the National Bank of Australasia, a Melbourne bank which had commenced business in the colony in 1866.

During the years 1873-79 there was no increase of cultivation, and, in the absence of this, the prosperity of these years could not be considered as deeply rooted. There were signs of progress and prosperity in Perth and Fremantle, but in the country districts there were few to be seen. Roads and railways were greatly needed, but the small population and doubtful future of the colony made it impossible to remedy this by the expenditure of borrowed money, while the slender revenue made it hopeless to expect that much could be spared from that source. The Colonial Office kept a watchful eye on the borrowing operations of the Government, and on its part the Government spent the money put at its disposal very carefully. A sum of £200,000 obtained in 1878 was used partly on road construction and partly on the railway between Fremantle and Guildford.

The revenue grew very slowly. Governor Ord, who came after Weld, had great trouble in keeping the expenditure within the limits of his resources, and when he retired in 1880 he left a slight deficit to his successor Robinson. A duty had been placed on flour and Robinson was looking round for a further source of revenue, when the opening up of the Kimberley district gave a timely stimulus to the land revenue, supplying all the additional money required. During 1881, 1882, and 1883 the revenue showed a very considerable surplus above the expenditure.

Business throughout Western Australia was active during 1881, more active indeed than in any previous year, and for the first time it seemed as if the colony was to become a place of investment for Australian capital. There was much speculation throughout Australia in pastoral land companies, and some attention was paid to Western Australia. This speculation might have reached large proportions, but unfortunately the year 1881 closed

in drought, which continued during 1882 with much damage to pastoral and agricultural interests. There was a comparatively large importation from South Australia of produce usually grown in the colony, and this caused a serious drain on the money of the country, as there were no exports by which they could be paid for. The farmers of Western Australia in many cases found themselves compelled to fall back on the trade in sandalwood and timber-getting to tide them over the difficult time of the drought. The pastoralists suffered severe losses of stock, and both cattle and sheep were generally in such poor condition that the stocking-up of the new country in the north was impossible.

Meanwhile in other respects the colony was progressing favourably. During 1881 it had launched very successfully its first 4 per cent loan, and considerable public works were being carried out; the Perth and Fremantle Railway was extended and other works undertaken, so that an unusual amount of money was in circulation. The farming and pastoral interests recovered in 1883, and from that year until 1888 the general trade of the colony was good, a condition attributable to the loan expenditure perhaps more than to any other cause. The need for railways was still very great, and this led the Government in 1884 to come to an agreement with Anthony Hordern of Sydney, for the construction of a railway on the land-grant system, from Albany to Beverley. The Western Australian Land Company, which was formed to deal with the land thus acquired, brought out a large number of immigrants; this gave a fillip to employment and made the building trades in Perth very busy.

There was much land speculation in Perth and Fremantle during 1885; this was in part a movement in sympathy with the extraordinary land speculation developed in all the eastern colonies, and in part due to local conditions. Land in Perth and Fremantle changed hands repeatedly during the year, every time at an advance on previous prices, but at no time did speculation reach a

sensational height. A good deal of building was undertaken in both towns, and there was a general replacement of the small wooden cottages that had served in some instances from the early days of the colony, by substantial brick structures of two and three stories. The land transactions were usually financed by the banks, to which, in 1883, another had been added, the Bank of New South Wales. Land speculation was checked towards the end of 1885, when the banks thought they had gone far enough, and it practically died out in April 1886, when no more purchasers could be found to continue the gamble. Speculation in town lots in Perth and Fremantle was replaced to some extent by other forms of speculation, and the rush to the Kimberley goldfields diverted attention into an entirely different channel. The excitement over Kimberley was perhaps greater in the mining and speculative centres of the eastern colonies than in Perth, but there was a very confident opinion that the fields would prove rich and extensive, and Western Australians were eager to share in the spoil. Land was in demand at Derby, the most convenient port for the field, and the Government, profiting by this, disposed of town lots at high prices. All supplies needed by the diggers going to the fields rose rapidly in price, and the population of Perth and Fremantle found itself paying substantially more for flour, meat, butter, cheese, and bacon. The rush to Kimberley is described elsewhere. A few months' experience showed that there was little to be gained by the alluvial digger, and even the value of the country as a reefing field was not established. Deep depression succeeded to the foolish anticipations of April and May, and this was increased later by a scarcity of money. The bills arising out of the speculations of the previous twenty months were falling due, and the banks were indisposed to renew them. The advances of the banks had trebled during six years and were now £1,300,000. There had been no development of trade which seemed to warrant this increase, and the banks, thinking they had gone too far, sought to restrict

credit generally. For the best mortgages 8 per cent was the current charge and 10 or even 11 per cent was the rate on mortgages or overdrafts not answering to that description.

The failure of the harvest of 1886-87 intensified the depression, and large quantities of flour, potatoes, and other food-stuffs had to be imported. Governor Broome drew a gloomy picture of the condition of the colony in a despatch to the Colonial Office in August 1887: "The progress of the southern part of Western Australia has of late been in some respects rapid and real, but in others disappointing. Many newly erected and handsome buildings adorn Perth and the various towns of this part of the colony, which present quite a changed and flourishing appearance as compared with four or five years ago. Population has increased, but it clings too much to the towns. The country districts and the cultivation of the soil have made slow advance, and agriculture generally is in a depressed and backward condition. I do not notice much if any beginning of new farms and houses along the new line of railway. The expenditure of the 1884 loan of £525,000 has caused some business, but I am looking anxiously for a sounder state of things." Broome, like many others, had expected great things from the Kimberley goldfields, and his disappointment showed itself in his despatches, but he lived in the colony thereafter sufficiently long to take a more cheerful view of its prospects.

The Governor suggested that a further loan of £500,000 would be of advantage to the colony, but this was refused by the Colonial Secretary, although the colony had not borrowed in London for several years and its public debt was only about a million and a quarter. This refusal of the Colonial Office to sanction reasonable borrowing did much to strengthen the agitation for responsible government. The people of Western Australia were convinced that the chief need of their country was capital; they themselves were unable to supply what was needed, and

had little expectation that it would flow in from any source, either in Great Britain or Australia, in sufficient quantity, except as a State loan.

The discovery of gold by Anstey in the Yilgarn Hills brought with it the hope of better times, and other discoveries followed. The depression, however, did not disappear, but continued even as late as 1890, the unsettlement produced by the pending change in the form of government tending undoubtedly to its prolongation. During the years 1888, 1889, and 1890 there was almost an entire suspension of public works, and the direct effect of this stoppage on trade and employment was not compensated for by the immediate gain from the gold discoveries. The total production of gold in 1890 was still considerably below £100,000. Various extensive gold-fields had been discovered, but they were reefing and not alluvial fields, and for their development time and capital were required. If the quartz outcrops discovered had been sensationally rich, as was the case later on, money would have poured in freely, but in the early stages of mining, after the Kimberley failure, the burden of finding capital fell almost entirely upon Western Australia itself, and so far as it was met, it caused difficulties in other industries by the contraction of the amount of capital available for them.

A number of companies had been formed to develop the reefs at Kimberley, Yilgarn, and other places, and all through this period business in connexion with gold-mining stocks was transacted in Perth. In September 1888 the *Western Australian* newspaper for the first time contained a list in which the prices of fourteen gold-mining stocks in the Perth share market were quoted, and on the first of the following month the Perth Stock Exchange was opened.

In the middle of 1889 there was marked activity in gold-mining stocks; the Perth Stock Exchange, which had hitherto met twice a week, now began to meet daily, and dealing in Western Australian mining ventures had

extended to Adelaide and Melbourne. In Perth there was excessive speculation, and many companies were floated with a large nominal capital, without the intention of any real mining work being undertaken. Although the nominal capital of these companies ran into many millions, only a comparatively small sum was subscribed, but, small as it was, it constituted a great drain on Western Australian resources. Towards the end of 1889 the ability to continue speculation was spent, and there was an anxious waiting for the results of the crushings at Yilgarn. These began to appear during February 1890, and were in general favourable, but not to an extent that warranted an extravagant view of future prospects, and the development of the field was proceeded with slowly and on ordinary lines.

The year 1890, like its predecessor, was favourable to grazing and farming, but these industries did not claim any large share of public interest. The colony was pre-occupied with the change in the form of government, which to almost every one connoted the launching of a vigorous policy of public works and the development of the gold-fields. The new Parliament met for the first time in January 1891, and the Government at once announced its intention of borrowing in London £1,336,000 to be devoted to railway construction, harbour improvements, and the like. This sum, which equalled in amount the whole outstanding debt at the time, was the first of a series of large loans, that punctuated the progress of the colony thence onwards.

Business greatly improved with the introduction of responsible government, as the people were satisfied that the Premier, John Forrest, understood his colony, and could be counted on to do what was necessary to ensure its progress. The imports rose from £874,000 in 1890 to £1,280,000 in 1891. A considerable part of this increase was attributable to the delivery of goods for public contracts, but they were goods that the country needed and was in a position to pay for; there were no speculative

shipments to Western Australia during these years, and progress proceeded on very safe lines. It was now certain that Perth would receive an important increase of population; the land market, which had been stagnant since 1886, began to recover, and for building sites, especially those well situated for business, very large sums were paid.

The year 1892 was still more prosperous than 1891. The money spent on public works was circulating, and the value of the gold raised, though it scarcely exceeded a quarter of a million, was twice as much as in the previous year. The colony was drawing population from the eastern colonies, particularly from Victoria, where industrial conditions were growing steadily worse, and as the newcomers readily found remunerative occupation on their arrival, Western Australia was greatly benefited by their coming.

TRADE AND FINANCE IN TASMANIA

The period 1873-93, though it closed in deep depression, was on the whole a time of remarkable expansion in Tasmania, and the Island became in several ways, and for the first time, an important factor in the economic whole which Australia presents to the world. This expansion was due almost entirely to the successive discoveries of valuable metals, especially gold, tin, silver, and copper. The existence of all these had long been known, but with the exception of gold none had been obtained in commercial quantities before 1873. The tin deposits at Mount Bischoff were discovered in 1872, and in September 1873 the mine was floated as a limited company with a capital of £60,000 in shares of £5 each. Although little was done during the first year or two to develop the deposits, the richness of the mine was well assured, and the prospects of immediate and large developments infused new life into the general business of the Island. Several other factors tended in the same direction. There was a good harvest at the beginning of 1873, and during the year the construction of the Main Line Railway, which had just

begun, brought about increased employment and the circulation of what, in Tasmania, were considered large sums of money; the output of gold, though officially stated at £15,300, very greatly exceeded that sum, and fresh discoveries of the precious metal were being continually made; the bank deposits were steadily growing larger, and, lastly, the public revenue was in a satisfactory state. These conditions were a direct incentive to speculation, and during 1873 there was a considerable boom in mining shares and properties in both Launceston and Hobart, especially in the first-named town. As a direct result of these speculations, several extensive bankruptcies occurred in Launceston early in 1874, and in the case of four of the bankrupt firms the liabilities totalled £330,000 against nominal assets valued at £27,000. These failures were a serious blow to the small commercial community of Launceston, and there was a suspension of nearly all kinds of business in the town for about three weeks. An examination into the affairs of the insolvent firms showed that their position was due to grave imprudence, not unmingled with dishonesty. The failures were not symptomatic of general unsoundness, and when this was understood, business at Launceston with the outer world was resumed.

From the first establishment of banking business in the colony the banks had not greatly sought after fixed deposits, but had accepted them when offered, allowing 1 or 2 per cent interest, and at the opening of this period the deposits greatly exceeded the advances. In January 1874 the two English banks, the Bank of Australasia and the Union Bank, decided to assimilate their practice in Tasmania to that followed elsewhere in Australia, and made it known that they were prepared to pay interest on deposits at the annual rate of 3, 4, or 5 per cent for three, six, or twelve months; at the same time they reduced their discount rates from 7 and 9 per cent to 5 and 6 per cent. This action was interpreted as an attempt to absorb the whole banking business of the colony, and the local

banks at once altered their rates of interest and discount, to correspond with those of their rivals. The purely Tasmanian banks had been accustomed to depend on their own capital rather than on their deposits, and, at the time of the change, had advanced about £200,000 more than the total deposits in their hands. It therefore became necessary for them to increase their business very greatly if they were to maintain the earnings of previous years.

During the later months of 1874 and throughout 1875 there was a strong revival of mining speculation, but the development of the mines was held back owing to the difficulty in transport to and from the mines. This was particularly the case with the tin-mines, which for the most part were situated in country almost inaccessible to vehicular traffic. It was indeed a common jibe that after three-quarters of a century of settlement there was but one good road in the Island. Most of the mines had no better means of access than tracks, along which pack-horses could go with difficulty, and, in consequence, the costs of winning the ore and carrying it to the seaboard were so great, that were it not for the richness of the mines they would have been abandoned as unworkable. The Government was alive to the great need of road construction if the mining industry was to be developed, and in 1873, 1874, and 1875 comprehensive schemes were laid before Parliament, but to these the Legislative Council year by year refused its sanction. When its proposals were rejected in 1875 the Government thought to bring pressure to bear upon the Council, by proroguing Parliament for a few weeks and then submitting fresh proposals at a special session. This was done, and the Government's scheme of public works was again accepted by the Assembly, only to be rejected once more by the Council. In this way very necessary works were held up for several years, and it was not until December 1877 that the Government was able to secure the fairly large provision of £140,000 for the construction of roads and bridges to give access to the mining area. Meantime, in spite of these drawbacks, the output

of the tin-mines grew steadily; in 1876 it was valued at £100,000, and in 1877 at £300,000.

The satisfactory result of the mining operations of the Island in 1876 and the succeeding years was accompanied by a marked increase in trade, emigration ceased to be a drain upon the population, and it seemed that the Island was at the beginning of a period of prosperity. In order to meet the expenditure on public works and to redeem debentures about to fall due, the Government arranged to float a 4 per cent loan in London, and subscriptions were invited in April 1878 for £300,000 of stock. Unfortunately for the success of this operation a controversy was going on at the time between the Government and the company which had undertaken to construct a railway from Hobart to Launceston. The capital of the company had been subscribed in England, and the Government had undertaken to pay £32,500 a year, for a certain term, as the equivalent of interest on the cost of construction, provided the line were built in accordance with an agreed specification. The Government professed itself dissatisfied with the manner in which construction had been carried out, and after the line had been completed the sums due as interest were withheld. The appearance of the Tasmanian Government as a borrower in the London market afforded an opportunity to the irate shareholders to vent their grievance, and on the day before the subscriptions for the loan closed, a letter setting out the case for the company appeared in the *Times*, with the consequence that only £70,000 of stock was applied for. The balance of the loan was obtained a few days later at the minimum price, but the Stock Exchange refused to grant a quotation for the issue, thus greatly prejudicing the financial position of the Government in London. It would be idle to enter here into a discussion of the details of the various and long-drawn-out disputes about the Main Line Railway, which were not entirely settled until 1890, when the Government acquired the line. While it can be conceded that the Tasmanian Government was perfectly honest in its intentions, it is

also certain that it behaved very injudiciously in the management of its case, and its position was made worse by the fact that it had not the money in hand with which to pay the interest it had withheld, nor had provision been made to raise the money by way of taxation. During 1878 the Government proposed taxes on land, mortgages, and dividends, which would have provided the interest required, but these proposals met with great opposition and finally disappeared when the Government was thrown out of office in December 1878.

The new Ministry, of which Crowther was Premier, decided to pay the Main Line Company the arrears of interest which had accumulated, but having no means of doing so except by borrowing, it proposed to fund the amount and impose a tax of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the annual value of real property and on all other incomes above £100 per annum. The Council threw out the income tax proposals, and thus brought about the resignation of the Government in October 1879. A Coalition Government was then formed, which included two members of the Crowther Ministry, with Giblin and Moore, who had been in Fysh's former Ministry. Giblin was Premier. This Government was in a stronger position than any of its immediate predecessors, and was able to pass a measure imposing a duty of 9d. in the pound on the annual value of real and personal estate and an excise duty of 3d. per gallon on beer. By these means the revenue was made equal to the expenditure and provision made for the deficit of former years.

During 1877 and 1878, in spite of the great drawback of much factious political discussion, Tasmania made substantial progress. The tin-mining industry was well established, and gold-mining, though subject to many fluctuations and a prey to company promoters, also contributed to the general prosperity. The year 1879 was marked by considerable depression throughout Australia, but its mining industry enabled Tasmania to meet the difficulties of the time with an ease which was far from characteristic of the other colonies.

During this year the banks raised their rates for deposits to 4, 5, and 6 per cent for money fixed for three, six, and twelve months. This change was due to conditions prevailing on the mainland. Money in Tasmania was fairly plentiful, and in February 1880 rates were reduced to 3, 4, and 5 per cent, and in August to 2, 3, and 4 per cent. The monetary ease was taken advantage of by the Government to offer £50,000 of Treasury bills at 5 per cent. The response of the public was cordial, and the issue was allotted at a price slightly above par, which made a favourable contrast to the experience of the previous year, when the Treasurer had with difficulty placed his bills at 6 per cent.

The two years 1881 and 1882 mark a period of general prosperity throughout Tasmania. The Government had put its finances in order, the revenue was well in excess of the expenditure, and money was found for public works and immigration; the difference with the Main Line Company was composed for a time, and in April 1881 a loan for £300,000 was placed in London at an average of £99 : 11 : 9, which was the highest price, up to that date, paid for an Australian 4 per cent loan in England. Both Hobart and Launceston made great progress. Building in Launceston went on rapidly, and the price of building sites advanced about 50 per cent during these years. At Hobart the progress was not so marked, but there were great improvements, and many of the dilapidated houses in which the city abounded were removed and replaced by better dwellings; the water-supply and sewerage were also greatly improved. These last were much-needed reforms, as Hobart had suffered greatly from typhoid. The harvests of 1881 and 1883 were good, and the pastoralists did very well also. There was a drought in 1882, and apart from that there was a decline in the attention devoted to cereal crops, but the Island showed no signs of depression on that account, as agriculture, in spite of the great progress in fruit and vegetable cultivation, had ceased to be a main factor in Tasmanian prosperity.

The improved condition of the Island was due mainly

to the development of its mineral wealth. The output of tin showed a most satisfactory increase, and Mount Bischoff shares, which had been placed on the market in 1873 at £5 each, were freely sold in 1880 at prices ranging from £52 to £55. This price was considered well justified seeing that the company had paid dividends to the amount of £210,000 on a share capital of £60,000. While no other deposits approaching in richness the Bischoff had been discovered, other tin mines were yielding satisfactory results. The value of gold won was not so great as that of tin, but much attention was devoted to working known deposits and to the search for fresh ones. The two gold-mining centres, Gladstone and Beaconsfield, were growing rapidly into thriving little towns. The production of gold probably reached £250,000 in 1881, and though it fell away in the following years, there was no loss of faith on the part of the gold-seekers or the public in the richness of the deposits.

During 1879 mining speculation had died down, but towards the close of the following year it revived and was rampant again at the beginning of 1881. In April the operations of a number of fraudulent companies attracted a good deal of public attention, and for a few months speculation almost ceased; but in August it was revived and at once became more violent than ever. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that any one who could lay hands on a few pounds immediately bought mining shares. There was some backing for this speculation, as metals valued at £650,000 were raised where six years previously not £50,000 worth was obtained. Hundreds of mining companies were formed in 1880 and 1881, so that there was abundant opportunity for speculation. From Launceston the mania spread to Hobart, and Victorian company promoters and speculators joined in and ministered to the excitement.

The production of gold fell off during 1882, but this was generally accepted as being due to bad management and the faulty methods of separation in use; the production

of tin was increased, but the price of the metal declined from £114:10s. per ton in January to £92:10s. in December, so that there was no increase in the value won. General trade was good, the public revenue was well maintained, and deposits flowed steadily into the banks.

There was a general commercial depression throughout Australia in 1883, and this was felt in Tasmania, not indeed acutely, but sufficiently to interrupt many promising enterprises. Speculation had overreached itself during 1881 and 1882. Money became dearer, and the banks, which had been steadily increasing their advances, raised their deposit rates to 4, 5, and 6 per cent per annum for money fixed for the usual terms and their discount rates to 7 and 8 per cent for bills at three and four months. There was a poor harvest at the beginning of 1884, and a considerable fall in the production of both gold and tin, so the value of Tasmanian produce exported was some 15 per cent less than in the previous year. Unsatisfactory conditions of production continued during 1885, and there would undoubtedly have been a marked depression and increased unemployment had it not been for the large loan expenditure upon which the Government had now entered. At the beginning of 1883 a loan of £500,000 had been raised in London, and in 1884 a further loan of £800,000. Most of this money was spent on railway construction and found steady employment for 2000 to 3000 men. Towards the end of 1885 the issue of another 4 per cent loan for £1,000,000, to be spent on railways and other public works, was authorized by Parliament, and this money was obtained in July 1886 at an average price of £99:17:11, twice the amount asked for being offered by the market.

Silver was discovered in the western districts of the Island in 1885, the most important deposits being in the neighbourhood of Zeehan. The development of the fields was slow, as the country was difficult and without roads or other means of communication, and it was not until 1899 that the value of the ore raised reached £100,000. In 1887 there was a slight increase in the gold yield, and the

price of tin was sufficiently high to secure renewed attention to that metal. Many new leases, both gold and tin, were taken up, a large number of new companies were formed, and there was some revival of speculation. This revival proved short-lived. The new companies for the most part failed to reach the dividend-paying stage, and their leases were abandoned.

The people of Tasmania had formed the highest opinion of the mining possibilities of their colony, and exaggerated hopes had been entertained as to the immediate future of tin and gold mining, especially of the latter. Many had hoped to see a new Ballarat spring up, and, great as was the success of Mount Bischoff, they looked to Heemskirk and its lodes to prove even more productive. These hopes, as we have seen, were not realized and, after 1883, were entertained by very few; hence it became no longer possible to promote companies or sell shares on a large scale.

The disappointment which had thus attended the hopes formed of vast mining expansion led the Government to realize the neglect into which agriculture had fallen, and special efforts were made to establish a small proprietary class and to find profitable markets for agricultural products. The local market was small and not likely to expand, and at various times Governments sought for an extension in the wider markets of the mainland. Several of these markets were practically blocked by high protective tariffs, and it was thought that these obstacles might be overcome by the grant of special concessions in Tasmania to any colony extending favourable treatment to Tasmanian products. The first approach was made to Victoria, which was the most accessible market for Tasmania's surplus; New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia were each in turn appealed to. Nothing came of these overtures. This failure led the Government and producers of Tasmania to turn to the remote English markets, and in 1888 the Island began to develop an export trade in fruit with London. There were at first many disappointments, but the trade grew steadily, helped greatly by the enterprise

of the British shipping companies, and in the end there was a market for as much fruit as the Island could send.

The years 1889 and 1890 were rather dull. In 1889 there was a largely reduced export of wool, and in 1890 a poor harvest and a greatly reduced export of minerals. In the latter year the Island suffered from the great maritime strike, which cut off its usual inrush of visitors and for a few weeks dislocated trade. As soon as the strike was settled there was a revival of speculation in silver-mining, but the greater part of the money involved was Victorian. Some ardent spirits, untaught by past experience, expected Zeehan to develop into another Broken Hill, but though important in itself and of substantial advantage to Tasmania, the Zeehan area did not rival Broken Hill.

The change in the industrial position of the Island between 1880 and 1890 brought with it important changes in its banking business. The old privately owned banks became limited companies, and all the local banks made additions to their capital. In the interval of ten years the total banking deposits grew from £2,122,000 to £4,159,000 and the assets from £2,215,000 to £4,712,000. Amongst the financial institutions of the colony none was more respected and trusted than the Bank of Van Diemen's Land. It had originally been a private company, not eager for deposits, and trading largely with its own capital. It had become a limited company in 1880, and had added £50,000 to its capital by the issue of premium shares in 1890. Its usual dividend had been 8 per cent, but at the half-yearly meeting in July 1891 the directors had recommended an increase in the dividend to 9 per cent, while £2000 was added to the reserves. The shareholders were told that the development of the bank's business in Hobart itself and on the silver fields warranted an optimistic view being taken of its prospects, and a further improvement in the dividend was to be anticipated. Within three weeks of this meeting the directors found themselves compelled to appeal for help to the other banks. This would doubtless have been given them, but an inspection of the bank's

books showed that the balance-sheet presented to the shareholders was fraudulent, and that by injudicious and improper advances the bank had lost at least £261,000, a sum almost equal to the whole of its capital and reserves. The immediate cause of the appeal made to the other banks was the necessity the bank was under to pay over large sums entrusted to it by the Government and also various considerable sums advanced by other banks. On assistance being refused, the Bank of Van Diemen's Land suspended payment.

The facts connected with the business of the bank were not immediately known, and for several weeks hopes were entertained that an arrangement would be come to, with one or other of the banks, to take over the whole business of the suspended bank. Negotiations were opened with the City of Melbourne Bank and afterwards with the Union Bank and the Bank of Australasia, but without result. At last a basis of agreement was arrived at under which the National Bank of Tasmania would absorb the business of the suspended bank. A new bank was to be formed with £200,000 of capital beyond that possessed by the National Bank, and the Government so far approved of this arrangement that it agreed to deposit with the new bank £200,000 worth of Treasury bills until the required capital could be obtained. The Assembly went so far as to pass a Bill, authorizing the issue of the Treasury bills, and both Houses passed a Bill to enable the Bank of Van Diemen's Land to dispose of its business without the usual formalities and delays. The new capital to be issued consisted of 20,000 shares of £10 each, and the subscription of 16,000 shares was arranged. As these negotiations proceeded, the Government grew more cautious, and at last so hedged in its proposed deposit with restrictions and limitations, that the National Bank refused to proceed with the business, and in October 1891 the suspended bank went into voluntary liquidation. While these negotiations were pending the British Bank of Australasia and the Anglo-Australian Bank closed their doors. These

were Victorian institutions, the one trading at Launceston and the other at Hobart. Neither was really entitled to the name of "bank" and, as they only held small amounts of Tasmanian money, the effect of their failure was slight; there was a run upon the Zeehan branch of the National Bank of Tasmania, but it was dealt with successfully, and elsewhere no disposition to panic was shown.

The determination of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land to go into liquidation was more serious in its effects than the original suspension. It was now certain that the shareholders would lose all their money and that the winding-up would bring to ruin many persons, who could not arrange their affairs so as to repay the advances made to them. Business in Hobart became absolutely stagnant, and hope of immediate improvement was taken away by the announcement that various public works, which had been planned, would not be undertaken owing to the impossibility of borrowing money for their construction. The hopelessness of the Government's financial position was further emphasised by its announcement that it would obtain legislative authority to hand over these works to private persons, if any such would make an offer for their construction. In these circumstances, all the banks operating in Tasmania thought it prudent to strengthen their position by importing coin, and though there was no run upon them, there was a lack of confidence in the local banks, manifested by the frequent removal of accounts to the English banks, which was most embarrassing to both parties.

The year 1891 closed in absolute gloom, want of confidence prevailed everywhere throughout the Island, and trade was at the lowest ebb. The early months of 1892 showed no improvement. On 12th April the Tasmanian Permanent Building Society, whose headquarters were at Hobart, suspended payment owing to the persistent withdrawal of deposits as they fell due. The society had a share capital of £18,000, and its deposits amounted to £40,000. A creditors' meeting was held, the depositors

agreed to renew their deposits for three years, and the society, which was an ordinary, well-managed concern, proceeded to a gradual realization of its assets. The stoppage of this little institution revived all the former distrust, and scared depositors again began to remove their money from one bank to another, without any sure indication that the bank they abandoned was any less safe than the bank of their choice.

Besides this disturbance of its credit system the colony had other serious troubles. The Government revenue was largely based on the customs receipts and on the expectation that an import trade approximating to £12:10s. per inhabitant would be maintained, but in 1892 there was a large drop in the imports, which did not reach £10 per inhabitant; in 1893 the average fell to £7, and in 1894 to £6:10s. Fysh was in office in July 1892, and, anticipating a continuous fall in trade, proposed a large increase in customs taxation, but his proposals were too drastic for acceptance, and he was defeated on a vote of confidence. The new Government took office under decidedly adverse conditions. A large deficit was accumulating which, it was estimated, would reach £220,000 at the end of the year. This the Treasurer proposed to meet by an issue of bills repayable either in London or Hobart; customs duties were increased and 1d. a gallon added to the excise on beer; the stamp duties were raised, and the dividend tax was made to apply to English companies, which had previously been exempted from taxation; the general expenditure was drastically reduced, and there was the inevitable reduction in the already meagre pay of the public officials.

Low prices prevailed throughout 1892 for agricultural and pastoral produce. The season was poor, especially for the farmers, and the unfavourable conditions of employment were reflected in the considerable exodus of population which went on during the whole year, the emigrants betaking themselves chiefly to Western Australia and New Zealand. Gold and tin mining showed no develop-

ment, but the general mining outlook brightened towards the close of the year, the silver yield improved, and the publication of a most favourable report on the copper deposits at Mount Lyell again awoke anticipations of prosperity.

The English banks had reduced their rates for fixed deposits at the close of 1892 to $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and owing to the stagnation of business these were reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in April 1893. The local banks were unable to follow in this reduction as they could not afford to lose deposits, and maintained the rates of 3, 4, and 5 per cent current during 1892. The tornado which swept over Australia in April and May 1893 did not lead to the suspension of any bank operating in Tasmania; nevertheless its effects were very serious for the Island. The finances of the Government, which were already in a bad way, were entirely dislocated, and an attempt to raise a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent loan of £800,000 at £92 : 2s. was a partial failure; this necessitated the Government curtailing its already reduced programme of expenditure at a time when the vigorous prosecution of public works would have helped to tide over the labour difficulties following the crisis. As the year advanced the monetary position grew very difficult. The banks raised their discount rates and kept a very keen watch over their advances, and the building societies ceased business, so far as concerned the lending of money on land or any security. The realization of the assets of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, which had been proceeding very slowly, at last came almost to a standstill, and an Act was passed permitting the remainder of the assets to be disposed of by lottery. The machinery of the lottery was set in operation during November 1893 by the issue of 300,000 tickets of £1 each.

The imports greatly declined during 1893, and the reduced purchasing power of the mainland injured the growing trade of Tasmania in fruit, vegetables, and stud sheep, so that trade was in a depressed condition when the period closed.

XII

THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL LABOUR PARTY IN AUSTRALIA

MORE than once in this chronicle it has been seen that the Labour movement in Australia bore a close analogy to that in England, and that this was no mere coincidence, but the result of an intimate sympathy arising out of the direct descent of the Australian unions from those of Great Britain. From 1873 onward new members were still entering the Australian trade unions fresh from those of Great Britain, and though this recruiting was on a much smaller scale than during the previous period, it was still sufficiently large to keep the Australian unions in close touch with those of England and fully imbued with their aims and aspirations. Nor were direct and frequent communications wanting between the trade unions of the two hemispheres, and in the case of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers there was an actual corporate union, the branches in Australia standing in precisely the same relation to the central executive in Great Britain as did the English branches; their funds even were pooled with those of the parent society. It was therefore a most natural thing that the agitation for shorter hours which was so energetically carried on in England during 1870, 1871, and 1872 should be followed by an agitation for the same purpose among the members of the society in Sydney. Although similar direct connexion did not exist in the case of other unions, there

were, nevertheless, means for the exchange of ideas. The English Labour papers, such as the *Beehive*, were studied by Australian trade union leaders, and these papers contained, from time to time, communications on the state of the Australian labour market and kindred subjects. The Australian trade unions were also in touch with the celebrated "International Association of Working Men." The programme of this society was that of the Australian trade unions, with such changes only as the local conditions demanded, and the revival of active trade unionism in Australia was coincident with the rise of this society, which held its first public congress at Geneva in 1866. The idea of arbitration as a means of deciding Labour questions was viewed with favour by the "International," and was advocated in the *Beehive*. The proper sphere and structure of courts of conciliation and arbitration were outlined in the *Beehive* in a series of articles which indicated exactly such a model as was afterwards adopted by the New South Wales coal-miners, and resembled, of course, those in existence in Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire at the time. The Sydney building trades also established a similar Board in 1878, which worked very successfully, and in 1891 Barton's permissive Act was placed on the Statute Book. One notable feature of the policy of the "International" was the direct representation of Labour in Parliament with a view to the regulation of the hours and conditions of labour by legal enactment, and this idea was taken up in Australia. The policy of uniting trade unions by means of trades councils was also advocated. Delegates from Australia were present at the meeting of the British section of the "International" in Nottingham in July 1872, and the close communication between that society and the Sydney trade unions, which existed before this, may be inferred from the fact that when the latter wished to stop immigration in 1866, the letter on the subject was sent to Robert Applegarth, a leading member, and at one time secretary, of the "International." But the most striking evidence

of the influence of English ideas upon Australian thought is to be found in the great change which occurred during the 'eighties. At the beginning of the decade the working classes accepted with little question the existing conditions of society; at its close they were seething with discontent, and fully determined by one means or another to alter the relations of labour and capital.

The revivification of Socialism which took place in England between 1881 and 1883 was followed very speedily by the energetic diffusion of Socialistic doctrines in Australia, and the means urged for the reconstruction of society followed exactly the same lines. It was during the years 1884 to 1889 that the established idea of trade unions as friendly societies was denounced by Burns, Mann, and their school in England, and the doctrine advanced that the true unionist policy was one of aggression, and its objective the nationalization of the means of production. The claims of unskilled labour to a place in unionism were strongly urged, as was also the necessity for a federation of workers "as wide as the civilized world." The strike, well organized and widespread, was held up as the most powerful weapon of the industrial classes. After 1889 ideas changed. The Socialists developed a scheme for capturing municipal and parliamentary power, and using such power to effect a gradual change in the direction of a Socialistic community. It is only necessary to consider these changes, and the times at which they occurred, to perceive that the English movement was always a little in advance of the Australian in point of time; both parties followed the same lines, but, owing to its much stronger position, the Australian Labour Party was able to achieve far more striking results. Even in small details the influence of the English movement is clearly traceable. Thus in 1889 or thereabouts, the Australian trade unionists raised the cry of "sweating," as if it were a great and pressing evil. In this they merely echoed the cry of the English workers, and with little regard for the facts, as the industrial census taken in New South Wales in 1891 amply

demonstrated that sweating was practically non-existent in that colony, and there was very little of it in any part of Australia.

The Labour cause was also greatly advanced in Australia by the publication of *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George's great book, which reached Australia about 1879, and was reprinted in one of the Sydney dailies. The book made many converts to the doctrine of the single tax. Most of these converts in their generous enthusiasm became sympathizers with the cause of Labour, and many of those who came to the front in the Labour triumph of 1891 were adherents of Henry George. Of even more extended if more evanescent influence was Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. This book had a prodigious circulation throughout Australia. There the workers are a reading class, and Bellamy's solution of the problem of living, his combination of Socialism and individual liberty, won the enthusiastic assent of all. The book was read and discussed in workshop and on station, in the mining camp and amongst the timber-getters; in fact, wherever a few workers were gathered together, there Bellamy was discussed and approved. Nor must the influence of the *Sydney Bulletin* be overlooked. Into every corner of the land it penetrated, postulating the demand of Australia for the Australians, and enforcing the doctrine that no worker is ever free who cannot meet his employer on terms of perfect equality.

The great change that took place in the attitude of labour towards capital during this time was not therefore the work of any one mind, and the tendency towards Socialism, which was undeniably strong, was not the work of the trade union leaders. The man who most helped to bring it about was William Lane, a journalist of Queensland. Lane was a Socialist of advanced views, who set out to convert trade unionism from a conservative force, used mainly for the aggrandizement of a small section of the community, into a social movement whose objective was the reconstruction of society. The old unionism had flourished almost entirely among the skilled workers, and had left

outside its scope a mass of unskilled labour, because its methods were inappropriate to such a body of men ; while the new unionism relied chiefly upon this class, though it sought to bind all classes of workers together for a common purpose.

In New South Wales early in the 'eighties the old-fashioned type of trade union was strong. The societies were devoted almost entirely to domestic trade matters and took little part in political affairs. Political divisions on the questions of the tariff and of education parted the working men as much as any other class. The Trades and Labour Council spoke with a divided voice on these questions, and though attempts were made from time to time to capture the Council by the advocates of a protective tariff, they were not successful. In the other Australian colonies these questions, especially the tariff question, no longer embarrassed political issues, and it was partly for this reason that the Labour Party first gained strength in Queensland and Victoria. The trade unions of New South Wales were drawn into the new movement, but they did not adopt fully and completely the views of their confederates, and, after the *débâcle*, they were disposed to return to the more conservative lines which they had been led to abandon while trying to accomplish the regeneration of the working classes in the fundamental manner aimed at by the Socialists.

Side by side with the movement associated with the name of Lane there was steady progress towards solidifying the cause of trade unionism, by joining all the workers in a national organization. There had been an intercolonial trades congress in 1879, and after 1882 one was held annually. These congresses became year by year of increasing importance in shaping industrial politics, and at them were discussed the problems, common to all the colonies, which directly or indirectly affected labour. At the congress held in Sydney during 1885, the abolition of State-aided immigration and the need for the protection of native industries were subjects which received a large

share of attention. Further, the President in his address urged the necessity for sacrifice in order to pay members of Parliament, and thus obtain representatives whom they could "trust and control." But though the idea of direct representation of Labour was thus distinctly present, the manner in which a Labour Party could be called into existence and the line of action which it ought to pursue were not clearly marked out. Lane set himself resolutely to alter this state of affairs and to organize the forces of Labour throughout Australia. He began to publish a paper called the *Boomerang*, which expounded his social and political views. He aimed at sweeping into the unions those members of organized trades who held aloof from them, and, by forming new unions for the large bodies of unskilled or semi-skilled labour which were without organization, uniting the whole industrial force of Australia into one compact body. When this task was completed, and all the unions were formed into a close federation, he believed their power would be so immense that their demands could not be resisted. This he regarded as a prelude and preparation for the adoption by the State of the control, not only of the means of production, but of all industries; but he did not deceive himself into believing that he could accomplish this work at once. Meanwhile he saw in the federation of Labour, with its weapons of the supported sectional strike and the general strike, a means for the rapid improvement of industrial conditions.

It must not be supposed that this doctrine of the complete organization of Labour was originated in any way by Lane. It was the doctrine which was being preached actively at the time in England, and there is no doubt that Lane was in close touch with the English movement. But he was its great and effectual exponent in Australia. He applied himself particularly and personally to the organization of the wool-shearers, and by so doing showed a considerable practical sagacity; for these men, numerous, well-paid, and intelligent, moving constantly from place

to place, and in many cases spending their intervals of leisure in the towns, formed a vast body of disciples for the propagation of his views, and they spread his doctrines wherever they went. Two unions were formed, the Queensland Shearers' Union and the Amalgamated Shearers' Union, the latter comprising the shearers of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. The two unions were federated at the beginning of 1890.

Wharf labourers and kindred trades were also brought into strong combination, labourers in the building trades were formed into a union, and many other unions were strengthened or formed, so that at the beginning of 1890 trade organizations in New South Wales and throughout Australia contained vastly larger numbers of men than they had ever done before.

During 1889 and 1890 most of the larger trade unions became federated; the first to take this step were the building trades, the shearers, the maritime workers, and the wharf labourers. The Federation of the last-mentioned union was arranged in March 1890, and the preamble to its rules set out that the Federation had been devised as a means "for the settlement of any difficulties between any members of the Federation and their employers, and by an aggregation of power to enforce legitimate and necessary claims where a single union would find the task beyond its individual strength." Finally the federated unions of all trades were united to form the Australian Labour Federation.

This immense combination was threatening in its very nature. It was pledged to support the claims of any of its sections, not only by finding money, but by the use of the "sympathetic strike." But beyond this it was well known that the ulterior aim of the Federation was a change in the basis of society, "something in the nature of a revolution," as one trade unionist afterwards declared. This attitude of the working classes roused the employers to take defensive measures, and in many trades, notably in the case of the shipowners and the pastoralists, unions

of employers were formed. These unions in the different states were federated for mutual support.

In November 1889 a conference of employers' unions met at Melbourne, at which representatives from New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland were present in addition to those of Victoria, and resolutions were passed in favour of establishing a federal council of employers' unions. This combination of the employers was rather welcomed by the Labour organizations, and in Sydney a joint committee was formed of members of the executive of the employers' unions and of the Trades and Labour Council, to consider a proposal to establish a Board of Conciliation and Arbitration. The rules and regulations for the working of this Board were drawn up, though the Board itself did not come actually into existence.

The year 1889 was remarkable for its freedom from industrial disputes, but this was only because the opposing forces were arraying themselves against each other, and early in 1890 it became evident that the battle would not be long delayed. Two extraneous events contributed to fix the time of the struggle. The successful strike of the dock labourers in London in August 1889 had a great effect in Australia. Its success had been due largely to the gift of £30,000 which the Australian trade unions had sent over. This gift, which was procured practically by Lane's efforts, is a proof of the close connexion of the Labour movement in England and Australia, and it was felt to be a demonstration of the world-wide solidarity of labour, just as the result of the strike was felt to be a proof that the united forces of labour were invincible. Undoubtedly the success of the English dock strike of 1889 encouraged the outbreak of the maritime strike in Australia a year later. The other event was the visit paid by Henry George to Australia in the early months of 1890. George went thither to propagate his principles of land nationalization, which he had already preached for some years in Europe and America. To the casual observer there might appear to have been less

warmth in the reception accorded to Henry George in Australia, than would have been anticipated from the greatness of his reputation and the enormous circulation gained by his *Social Problems* and *Progress and Poverty*. Doubtless the land problem in Australia was very different from that of Europe, or it appeared to be so to his hearers, and this may have accounted for some lack of enthusiasm; but on the question of social reform his words were received throughout a very wide circle, and by the working classes generally, with a respect that almost amounted to veneration. Discontent was rife amongst all classes of workers, and though such result was far from being sought for by him, Henry George's visit to Australia served to fan the smouldering ashes of social revolt, even then almost ready to burst into flame.

In another chapter there is given an account of the great strike, which, beginning on 19th August 1890, paralysed Australian industry for about ten weeks. In the end the employers won, the strikers being everywhere routed, and the men rushed back to work on any terms whatever. The right of the employers to employ what labour they choose was established, and trade unionism appeared to have received a blow from which even its most ardent friends thought it was little likely to recover. The unionists, however, considered that they had not been beaten in fair fight. Against them were arrayed not only the forces of capital, but the whole force of the Government, and to this hostility of the Government they attributed their defeat. Whilst the Government had punished the shearers and the seamen, who, in the interest of the cause, had left work without notice, it had protected the "blacklegs" on the wharves and in the mines, even to the extent of an unnecessary and irritating display of its military forces. To the minds of these men the Government, in its task of maintaining law and order, had taken sides with the employers, and had its intervention been withheld, they believed the issue would have been very different. It is not surprising that, holding these views,

they were ill disposed to accept their defeat as final. The unions had been beaten, they had been more than decimated, but they were not annihilated, and the leaders determined to use them in order to obtain political power, and to employ that power, when obtained, to prevent the forces of the Government ever being used against them.

It was the use of political power, not only as a supplement, but as an alternative to the use of the strike, which appealed most favourably to the Labour leaders; but as the shearers in Queensland were engaged, early in 1891, in a tremendous struggle, an attempt was made at once to organize the pastoral labourers. The rouseabouts and other workers of that class were the source from which the pastoralists were obtaining labour to replace the shearers who were on strike. These were not expert shearers, of course, but they were material out of which fairly good shearers could be made. Accordingly, in February 1891, the General Labourers' Union was formed, consisting of station hands other than shearers. Spence, the President of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union, was the secretary and organizer of the new union, which was, in fact, subsidiary to the other. An inviting programme was drawn up, including an advance in wages from 20s. to 25s. per week and certain improvements in the lodging of the men. Large numbers joined the union, but it did not succeed in its object of greatly curtailing the supply of "free labour" for the pastoralists. The shearers' strike of 1891 was, in the event, confined to Queensland, for though difficulties did occur at Bourke and elsewhere in New South Wales, no general strike was proclaimed; a few stations were shorn under the Shearers' Union rules, but the majority employed only free labour.

The defeat of the shearers in Queensland was an additional spur to the Labour Party in New South Wales to adopt a course of political action and to seek their ends by constitutional means, and there were not lacking many interested and disinterested advisers who urged them to

take this course. A good deal of sermonizing was indulged in by what the Labour Party chose to call the press organs of capitalism, concerning the wantonness of strikes, the equality of all citizens in the eye of the law, and the power of the electorate to compel a change in the laws if they were contrary to its wishes. Moreover, trade unionists were counselled, if they desired industrial boons, to seek them through Parliament, in the choice of whose members they had a say proportionate to their numbers in the community. While it may be conceded that this advice was honestly given, the idea undoubtedly existed that a general combination of working-class electors would be impossible, and the most that had to be feared was the return of a small group of working-class representatives, who would probably act together on Labour questions, but would otherwise be disunited, and, whether united or not, would be unable to influence in any great measure the general course of legislation. On their side the trade unionists had no exaggerated idea of their strength, still less of the capacity of their more prominent men to lead them to victory; nor did they suppose that the men they might return to Parliament would be able on equal terms to cope with the men of talent and parliamentary experience, who would be ranged on the side of their opponents. Nevertheless, with the lesson of their great defeat fresh in their minds, there was a general consensus of opinion that the experiment of an incursion into politics should be tried.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney had now become the centre point of Labour agitation in Australia. The question of sending Labour men to Parliament was talked over at the meetings of the unions, and as an outcome of these the Trades and Labour Council directed its parliamentary committee to draw up a scheme for the setting up of a Labour Electoral League in every constituency of New South Wales and a programme to be

put before the electorate. On 18th March 1891 the Council met and considered the report of its committee, and a fortnight later the scheme was, after some amendment, finally agreed to, and on 4th April the Balmain Labourers' Union formed the first branch of the Labour Electoral League of New South Wales. There was as yet no central body to co-ordinate the work of the various Leagues, but the parliamentary committee of the Trades and Labour Council did such work as was necessary and urgent, and, although practically without funds, set itself to work with the utmost diligence to prepare for the coming elections, which in the natural course of events would be held towards the close of the year 1891, and in no case could be postponed beyond February 1892. The task of forming new unions and increasing the membership of those already in existence was eagerly attended to, but a still wider appeal was made, and apostles of Labour were sent into all parts of the country for the purpose of forming local branches of the league, which should comprise not only trade unionists, but all persons sympathetic with Labour: the object of the league being proclaimed to be "to bring all electors who are in favour of democratic and progressive legislation under one banner." Any voter was eligible to join the league, a subscription of 5s. a year being asked from members for the purpose of paying the necessary expenses of the election. There were branches of the league in every electorate, and these branches were empowered to select their own candidates.

The party platform presented to the electors comprised sixteen propositions or planks as they were called, viz. :

1. Electoral reform to provide for the abolition of plural voting; the abolition of money deposits in parliamentary elections; extension of the franchise to sailors, shearers, and general labourers by means of a provision for the registration of votes; extension of the franchise to policemen and soldiers; abolition of the six months' residential clause as a qualification for the exercise of the franchise; single member electorates and equal electoral districts on adult population basis; all parliamentary elections to be held

on one day, and that day to be a public holiday, and all public-houses to be closed during the hours of polling.

2. Free, compulsory, and technical education, higher as well as elementary, to be extended to all alike.

3. Eight hours to be a legal maximum working day in all occupations.

4. A Working and Factories Act, to provide for the prohibition of the sweating system, the supervision of boilers and machinery, and the appointment of representative working men as inspectors.

5. Amendment of the Mining Act, to provide for all applications for mineral leases being summarily dealt with by the local wardens; the strict enforcement of labour conditions on such leases; abolition of the leasing system on all new goldfields; the right to mine on private property; greater protection to persons engaged in the mining industry, and inspectors to hold certificates of competency.

6. Extension to seamen of the benefits of the Employers' Liability Act.

7. Repeal of the Masters and Servants Act and the Agreements Validating Act.

8. Amendment of the Masters and Apprentices Act and the Trades Union Act.

9. Establishment of a department of labour, a national bank, and a national system of water conservation and irrigation.

10. Elective magistrates.

11. Local government and decentralization; extension of the principle of the Government as an employer through the medium of local self-governing bodies; the abolition of our present unjust and injurious method of raising municipal revenue by the taxation of improvements effected by labour.

12. The federation of the colonies of Australia on a national as opposed to an imperialistic basis.

13. The recognition in our legislative enactments of the natural and inalienable rights of the whole community to the land upon which all must live, and from which by labour all wealth is produced, by the taxation of that value which accrues to the land by the presence and needs of the community, irrespective of improvements effected by human exertion; and the absolute and indefeasible right of property on the part of all Crown tenants in improvements effected on the holdings.

14. All Government contracts to be executed in the colony.

15. Stamping of Chinese-made furniture.

16. Any measure that will secure for the wage-earner a fair, equitable return for his or her labour.

It will be seen that the first place in the programme was given to electoral reform, including "one man, one vote." The inclusion of this was, of course, very natural, seeing that property owners were entitled to a vote in every electorate wherein they owned property, and these votes would as a rule always be cast against Labour; but its position and the emphasis laid upon it during the electoral contests were due to the strenuous advocacy of the single vote by Sir George Grey, who had spent some time in Sydney attending the Federal Convention, held there during March and April 1891, as one of the representatives of New Zealand. The Convention itself was rather bored by Grey, who contributed little to its proceedings except the advocacy of "one man, one vote," but amongst the workers he was received, according to the description of one of their leaders, as "a labour evangel, who taught the workers to ask themselves what this federation might mean to them." When he spoke thousands gathered to hear him, and though his feeble voice carried only a few yards, the audience always remained motionless as a tribute to the brave old man. During the election the name of Grey was constantly on the lips of the speakers, and always received with loud demonstrations of approval. J. D. Fitzgerald, who was one of the successful candidates in the Labour interest, referring to the election says, "The name of Grey was constantly invoked and received always enthusiastically, and at meeting after meeting this phrase was repeated: 'They say we are leaderless, but we shall never want a leader while Grey lives.' That a man of Grey's record as a proconsul and democratic leader, the man who diverted the troops at the Cape to save the Indian Empire during the Mutiny, a man of aristocratic forebears and training, that such a man should have espoused the cause of Labour was an immense asset to the workers in the fight upon which they had now entered." After electoral reform the

largest space in the manifesto of the new party was devoted to the taxation of land values. This was attributable to the presence in its ranks of an influential body of single-taxers, disciples of Henry George. Their leader's recent visit had fired them with an enthusiasm almost religious in its intensity.

While these preparations of the Labour Electoral League were going forward in New South Wales, the Parliament of that colony was divided into two parties: the Free Traders led by Parkes, and the Protectionists by Dibbs, although the last-mentioned counted amongst his supporters some who were advocates of Free Trade. The final session of the fourteenth Parliament opened on 19th May 1891, and the programme presented by the Government dealt with federation, local government, electoral reform, trade disputes, and many other matters, but the serious business of legislation was entirely neglected in the struggle for office. G. H. Reid, a Free Trader and a nominal supporter of Parkes, challenged the Ministry on the address in reply to the Governor's opening speech, on which he moved an amendment condemning "the Bill drafted by the Convention for the purpose of founding an Australian Commonwealth," and, when this was defeated, Dibbs at once moved a direct vote of want of confidence in the Government. The debate upon this motion was particularly acrimonious, and, on the division, Reid and a few other Free Traders who were acting with him went over to Dibbs, the Ministry being saved only by the casting vote of the Speaker. Parkes demanded a dissolution, which was granted by the Governor, and an election was ordered for June 1891. In his manifesto to the electors Parkes complained of the factious proceedings of the Opposition, and submitted a programme in which the first place was given to Federation and Free Trade, the Bills proposed in the last session of the preceding Parliament being subordinately enumerated. Dibbs on his part demanded a mandate for the introduction of Protection. It did not occur to any of the leading men on either side that the new party, which was being formed

under their eyes, would prove a serious inconvenience to them. Six or eight was the largest number of Labour members that they expected to see in the new Parliament, and, as far as the Labour Electoral League was concerned, that body did not look, even in its most optimistic mood, for a return of more than fifteen Labour supporters.

There were 141 members to be returned, and the polls resulted in the election of 50 Ministerialists, 55 Opposition and 36 Labour members. Six members included in the other parties were Labour sympathizers and owed their election largely to Labour votes. The Labour Party therefore held the balance of power and was naturally vastly elated by its success. Its members lost no time in announcing that they intended to use their power to extort from whichever party was in office as much as it was possible to obtain, or, as one member bluntly put it, "the party was up for sale."

During the progress of the elections there had been a general understanding in Labour circles that the new party was to keep itself clear of all entanglements or alliances with other parties and the fiscal question was to be put aside altogether, the Labour members voting for or against the Government on that question, as the exigencies of the party's programme might demand. As soon as Parliament was called together, a meeting of the party was held at which it was decided that no leader should be appointed, and that any business that might arise outside the caucus should be attended to by a small committee. In the first flush of their enthusiasm the majority of the members were determined that no opinion of theirs should be allowed by them to stand in the way of the carrying out of those social reforms that the existence of the party connoted; consequently they were willing to bind themselves to vote in the way the majority might decide, and the question of solidarity, as it was called, occupied a considerable share of attention at this first meeting. Eventually it was decided—

- (a) That in order to secure the solidarity of the Labour Party, only those will be allowed to assist at its private deliberations who are pledged to vote in the House as a majority of the party sitting in caucus has determined, and
- (b) Therefore we the undersigned, in proof of our determination to vote as a majority of the party may agree, on all occasions considered of such importance as to necessitate party deliberation, have hereunto affixed our names.

The majority of the Labour members signed this document, but several of the Protectionists withheld their hand, determined to see a little more of the working of the party before committing themselves to so important and comprehensive a pledge, and one of them, Mackinnon, at once left the party. The resolution, that only those pledged to vote as the majority might determine would be allowed to attend the meetings of the party, was not adhered to, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the regular meetings of the party foreshadowed by the resolution were not held; in their place there were less formal gatherings, from which the non-pledged members were not excluded. Out of these meetings came the specific determination that the party should give a general support to Parkes' Government and await developments.

Meanwhile Parkes had been carefully considering the situation, and the programme of business which he put into the Governor's speech at the opening of Parliament was a very different one from what would have been put forward had the Labour Party not held the balance of power. A Bill was promised to remodel the laws under which members were elected to the Legislative Assembly, so as to put all electors on a footing of equality, the abolition of the money deposit required from candidates, and the division of the colony into single electorates. Other Bills promised were "to prevent and mitigate the disastrous consequences of Labour disputes by the construction of courts of conciliation and tribunals for determining cases of arbitration," "to amend the mining laws and provide

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for mining on private property," and a Factory and Workshop Act. As the first result of its success at the polls, the Labour Party was able to secure the adoption by the Parkes Government of four of the principal planks of its platform. But this was not the whole of its success, as the Government was pledged to introduce taxation of unimproved land values, and had undertaken to give facilities for the passing of a Bill to repeal the law against picketing. Such a Bill was introduced and passed through the Assembly, but rejected by the Council.

The inconvenience of not having a party leader was felt immediately Parliament entered upon its regular business. There was no one to tell the Government on what condition support would be given or when it would be withheld. It was soon obvious that the fiscal question was likely to occupy a large share of the attention of Parliament, but on the address in reply to the Governor's speech George Black, who claimed to speak with authority, declared that "we, who represent the Labour Party, have given our pledge not in any way to vote with any regard to the fiscal question. We do this irrespective of beliefs held by some of us that there are certain virtues in Free Trade and Protection, because those who have returned us have chosen to think, as I think, that there is no health in either Protection or Free Trade for any man who has to labour with his hands or his head." This attitude was endorsed by the majority of the party, who as it chanced were Free Traders, as it left Free Trade in the ascendant; but the extreme Protectionists were not so minded, and Black's deliverance was promptly repudiated by several speakers, who claimed that the salvation of Labour could be obtained only through Protection, without which all other remedies would be in vain.

Counting 17 of the 36 Labour members as Protectionists with the 55 members of the Opposition, there were 72 Protectionists in a House of 141, and it is therefore easy to understand the determination of the Opposition, as a matter of party tactics, to raise the fiscal question on every possible

occasion. The Labour Party was composed entirely of persons unskilled in parliamentary proceedings, and a short experience of their presence in the Legislative Assembly showed that they were little amenable to party discipline. The Opposition expected, by a frequent raising of the fiscal controversy, to be able to make a permanent breach between the two wings of the Labour Party, as it was evident that some of the Labour members were "more fiscal than labour"; its first effort in this direction was such as greatly to encourage it in its design.

Parliament met on 14th July 1891, and Dibbs at once moved an amendment to the address in reply to the Governor's speech, indicating the Assembly's want of confidence in the Government; to this a further amendment was moved by James Garvan, demanding that an open conference between representatives of the Pastoralists' Union and of the Shearers' Union should take place immediately, and declaring in favour of "the protection of the labour of the country against the ruinous competition of low-priced labour in other parts of the world." Garvan's artful amendment was defeated by 77 votes to 58, and included in the minority were nine of the Labour Party; Dibbs' original amendment was defeated by 80 votes to 57, including six members of that party. These six were Gough, Kelly, Langwell, Mackinnon, Morgan, and Vaughan, all Protectionists, who now became identified with the Opposition. Three others, Edden, Scott, and Sheldon, who had voted for the Garvan amendment, also left the party, although they did not identify themselves with the Opposition, and the Labour Party which had entered the House 36 strong was now reduced to 27 members.

As the parliamentary session advanced the differences amongst Labour members in regard to Free Trade and Protection developed very seriously. On 1st September 1891 Copeland moved a resolution in favour of placing protective duties on "manufactured articles imported into New South Wales, entering into competition with local

productions, and also upon all agricultural produce." In this debate McGowen, who was acting as spokesman of the party, declared that it was the intention of the Labour members to "sink the fiscal question"; but Edden asserted that "to the sixteen planks (of the Labour platform) I am pledged, but I am not pledged to sink the fiscal question, nor will I ever do so." The resolutions were met by an amendment in favour of cessation of controversy until the establishment of federation; this was carried, the seceding members of the Labour Party voting with the minority.

The frequent introduction of the fiscal question began to affect the Labour members very much as the Opposition intended, and this was clearly recognized by the leading spirits of the party, who, in order to stop any further losses, regain public respect, and win back those who had already seceded, hit upon the device of putting up one of their fellow-members to move a resolution in favour of a plebiscite being taken on the subject of the tariff. In the debate on this motion the Labour Party for the first time displayed something approaching unanimity, but the resolution was favoured by neither the Government nor the regular Opposition, and was defeated by 45 votes to 28, the minority being composed almost entirely of Labour members.

As we have seen, the party had agreed to give general support to the Government, and in a sense they did so, but from their first entry into Parliament Parkes found them very difficult allies. "They gave their support," he said, "after a manner of their own, and very much as an ungracious man gives charity. Even in dealing with measures of which they approved, they seemed to find an offensive satisfaction in trying to compel the Government to take their course rather than its own." Parkes was not a man to cling to office for office's sake; on the contrary, he held very high views of the dignity of his position as constitutional adviser of the Crown, and while he was willing to placate his allies, there was a limit to the amount of dictation to which he would submit from them.

The Government had before the Assembly a Coal Mines Regulation Bill, and though the Bill had been agreed to by the Cabinet, and introduced by the Minister for Mines, Parkes and some of the principal Ministers were unaware that it contained a clause fixing the maximum working hours, for persons between the ages of 14 and 17 years, and for all hewers of coal, at eight hours per day, with a penalty up to £10 for every breach of the law. During the consideration of the Bill in committee the hours of employment for all persons employed in or about a coal-mine were, at the instance of the Labour Party, limited to eight hours, with a break of twenty minutes for the midday meal. Parkes was not opposed to making eight hours a legal day, but declined to be a party to fixing any time as the maximum which a man could work, and the enforcement of that maximum under a penalty. The Bill was about to be read a third time when McMillan, who had recently resigned his position as Treasurer, moved for its recommittal, for the purpose of reconsidering the clauses fixing the hours of labour and the amount of the air-supply. McMillan received support from both sides of the Assembly, but in the debate much angry feeling was displayed. Eventually Barton, who was then sitting behind the Government, moved the adjournment of the debate, and this motion was accepted by the Government; indeed Parkes, who earnestly pleaded for an adjournment, went so far as to declare that unless it was granted he would not proceed further with the Bill. The Labour members all approved of the Bill, but they could not resist the temptation to humiliate the Government, and a vote being taken, the motion for adjournment was lost, 41 members voting with the Government and 49 against it. Four Labour members, Cook, Cotton, Fitzgerald, and Kirkpatrick, voted with the "Ayes" and 22 with the Opposition. The vote was not of such a kind as to call for the resignation of the Ministry, but Parkes was tired of his task-masters, and placed his resignation in the hands of the Governor.

A large section of the Labour Party was very pleased to compass the fall of the Ministry. There were the Protectionists, to whom Parkes stood as the keeper of the Free Trade citadel; the Roman Catholics, who were, as it chanced, also Protectionists, and who attributed to Parkes the wilful stirring up of sectarian strife; and the active participants in the maritime and coal-miners' strikes, who recalled with bitterness the sending of troops and machine-guns to Newcastle and Bulli, and the reading of the Riot Act during the great strike of the previous year. The antagonism to Parkes must indeed have been strong to overcome the objection of the Labour members to Dibbs, for few of them could have failed to remember that he, who would be called to form the new Government, was familiarly known amongst trade unionists as "Chinese" Dibbs, on account of his pugnacious attitude throughout the strike of 1878 when he led the party desirous of employing Chinese seamen on the Australian Steam Navigation Company's ships, and that he had warmly approved of the action of the Government in sending troops to overawe the Newcastle miners in 1890.

Dibbs assumed office on 23rd October 1891, and gave the Labour Party satisfactory assurances as to the nature of the legislation he would propose to meet its aspirations, but the party relied less on such assurances than on the power it could wield, in the event of legislation not being to its liking. The Dibbs Government was avowedly Protectionist, the first Government of that fiscal faith that held power in the colony. The Ministry, like its predecessor, had a minority in the Legislative Assembly, but had less *gêne* in holding office on the tolerance of the Labour Party; at the same time it sought a way of avoiding the humiliation of being perpetually under the lash of its allies. It was well informed of the state of feeling in the Labour ranks regarding the tariff, and felt assured that when its proposals for imposing Protective duties were put forward the Labour Party would be rent in two, and would remain so as long as the fiscal

question could be kept in one shape or another in the foreground of politics. In such a contingency the Ministry calculated on having the permanent support of at least half the Labour members, and with their own pledged supporters this would give them a working majority. As a matter of party tactics Dibbs therefore decided to put forward his fiscal proposals at an early date, and on 1st December 1891 the new customs tariff was tabled, and became operative next day. The number of articles subject to specific duties was largely increased, and *ad valorem* duties of 10 and 15 per cent were imposed. The Government could not claim that the new taxation was demanded by failure of existing sources of revenue, nor did it make any such claim, but frankly admitted that the object aimed at was Protection.

Parkes had now retired from the leadership of the Free Traders, and his place was taken by G. H. Reid, who at once directly challenged the position of the Government on the ground that while a "large number of pressing subjects . . . of vast importance to all classes of the community were ripe for settlement . . . this House deplures and will resist any attempt to bring about a conflict upon the question of Free Trade and Protection, until the verdict of the electors can be recorded upon the basis of one man one vote." The wording of this motion showed that the Dibbs Party had no monopoly of artfulness, but Reid's new-found zeal for one man one vote did not deceive any one, certainly not the Labour members. The question of the party's attitude in regard to the amendment was debated in caucus, and for the first time the worth of the pledge of members "to vote on all questions involving the fate of a Government as the majority might decide," was to be put to the test. The Free Traders formed a majority of the caucus, and as a concession to their friends, the Protectionists, it was decided to put up McGowen to move the addition to Reid's motion of the words "by means of a plebiscite." It was expected that while this, if carried, would relieve the party of future

troubles on account of the fiscal differences of members, it would not necessarily involve the resignation of the Dibbs Government. However this might be, the manœuvre was unsuccessful, for the McGowen amendment was ruled out of order as being substantially the same as the motion made by him a few weeks previously. There was now no alternative for the Labour Party other than a direct choice between Government and Opposition. More caucus meetings were held, all characterized by an entire absence of that brotherly love so conspicuous during the June electoral campaign, and at length a motion was carried by 16 votes to 11 that the party should oppose any alteration in the tariff. This decision, if acted on, involved the defeat of the Dibbs Government, and the wire-pullers, both of the Government and of the Opposition, were hard at work, the former influencing the minority to break their pledge, and the latter trying to preserve the advantage which the decision of the caucus would give to their side. The debate on the censure motion was purposely prolonged by the Government, in order that its influence should have an opportunity of becoming effective. A considerable number of Labour members took part in the debate; a few of them made a farcical pretence that the party was not split up; others took up the position that even if the party were to go to pieces on the fiscal question it would be found united on all questions directly affecting Labour. In spite of these apologetic utterances the majority took no pains to hide the fact that the party was widely separated in opinion, and during the closing hours of the debate the House was treated to a display of personal abuse by Labour members of one another, exceptional even in that unruly assemblage. When the division was taken the Government had a majority of 71 to 63 votes. Only one (McGowen) of the minority of eleven who opposed Free Trade in the Labour caucus kept his pledge and voted with the party majority, one was absent, and the other nine voted for an alteration in the tariff. The Government now set its parliamentary majority to work upon the tariff, and during

the passage of the Customs Duties Bill through the Assembly it had no more faithful supporters than the Protectionist wing of the Labour Party.

A few months after Dibbs assumed office his Government was reported to be about to strengthen its position in the Legislative Council, and the Trades and Labour Council thought the moment opportune to demand from the Government the appointment of several of its nominees. A deputation was commissioned to see Dibbs on the subject. The Labour Party had shown its power to make and unmake Ministries, and there was no doubt in any one's mind that if Labour support were withdrawn from the Government its career would be short indeed. Conscious of this, and therefore of the reasonableness of its demand, the deputation waited on Dibbs early in January 1892 with a pleasurable anticipation of an amiable compliance with its wishes, and it came as a shock to its members to hear the Premier declare that the Trades and Labour Council was an irresponsible political body whose right to nominate members to the Legislative Council he refused to recognize. The Council was greatly chagrined at this answer, and its chairman publicly attributed the refusal of the Government to listen to its request to the dissensions amongst the party in Parliament, as no Government would have ventured to refuse such a request from a united Labour Party.

The Labour dissensions in Parliament were, however, only the echo of the dissensions out of doors. The Labour Electoral Leagues were, as we have seen, called into being by the Trades and Labour Council of Sydney, but they embraced "any persons sympathetic with Labour, and in favour of democratic and progressive legislation," and many of these persons were not trade unionists. When the Leagues had been formed provision was not made for a central committee to co-ordinate their work, and for some little time the Trades and Labour Council, as was natural, took the position of headship of the Labour Electoral movement. All went smoothly until the members

returned in the Labour interest assembled in Sydney for the opening of the new Parliament, when it was seen that, as matters stood, the parliamentary representatives could not be expected to acknowledge responsibility except to their own constituents. Before, however, any question could arise as to the position of Labour members in regard to the Trades and Labour Council, the Council itself was involved in a dispute with the Electoral Leagues.

The Trades and Labour Council, and the unions affiliated to it, had been formed for certain definite purposes which may be summed up as a defence of the organized trades. When Labour entered politics it was not that trades unionism had accomplished its work, but that another instrument was demanded to do other work; as J. C. Watson, one of the leaders, declared, "they did not throw away trades unionism, but while relying upon it for defence, took up political action as an offensive weapon." The Leagues had not long been established before several of them began to make proposals for enlarging and altering the platform of the party, and as each League was supreme within its own boundaries there was a likelihood of there being not one, but one hundred and forty-one Labour Parties, one for each electoral district of the colony. This independency was favoured by a section of the parliamentary party, but condemned by the majority of the Leagues, and by the central executive; the last named was presided over by the President of the Trades and Labour Council, and comprised ten other representatives of that Council and a delegate from each of the Labour Electoral Leagues.

A general conference of the Leagues met on 26th January 1892 (Anniversary Day), and the delegates lost no time in assuming a position in regard to the parliamentary representatives, which was tantamount to one of overlordship. The Conference also decided to deny to the Trades and Labour Council more than a subordinate place in the political Labour movement, and, as a preliminary, reduced its membership on the Executive Council of the

League from eleven to three. The Trades and Labour Council did not relish these proceedings and energetically protested. The Labour Leagues took up the position that the functions of the two organizations were entirely different; and, while the leagues and the unions should work in very close sympathy, it was expedient that each should confine itself to its own sphere. The sphere of the Trades and Labour Council was the relations of employers and employed; that of the Labour Leagues, social reform. While holding these views the Labour Leagues were willing to concede to the unions direct representation on the Executive Council, in recognition of the historic position of the unions, and the usefulness of their organizations for carrying on the work of political propaganda.

In this controversy the position of the Trades and Labour Council was from the first extremely weak. The Council claimed that, having initiated the political Labour movement, it was entitled to direct that movement until it chose to surrender the control into more competent hands, and for the time being the hands of the Electoral League Conference were of doubtful competency, as in that body were included many persons who were not trade unionists. Early in March 1892 the Trades and Labour Council, after protesting against the reduction of the number of its delegates to the executive of the Labour Electoral Leagues, demanded from that executive the surrender of all books, documents, and money in its possession as being the property of the Council. This demand was refused, and the wordy warfare went on for several months, until the folly of the proceedings was recognized, and a compromise arrived at between the disputants. It was agreed—

That the President of the Council should be *ex officio* Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Labour Electoral League.

That the Central Committee should consist of six representatives of the Council with the President and one delegate from each branch of the League.

That each body appoint one trustee.

That the additions to the platform be approved of by the Council.

That the new rules drafted and adopted by the League subject to the foregoing provisions be approved of by the Council.

Meanwhile both the executive of the Labour Leagues and that of the Trades and Labour Council were in communication with the parliamentary Labour Party seeking to reconcile its warring factions. On 18th January 1892, that is, about a week prior to the first conference of the Electoral Leagues, the Central Executive of the Leagues invited the Labour members to confer with it, with the object of finding a means of uniting the party, and twenty-two members responded to the invitation. At this time the dispute between the Trades and Labour Council and the Leagues had not broken out, and the President of the Council took the chair at the Conference. In his opening speech he said: "They expected that the Labour members without any dictation from the Central Committee would find their own solution how to reunite . . . and they, the representatives of the Labour Leagues, had a right to demand that individualism should be sunk. . . . As the Labour members were now they were of little use to Labour, and they were damning the prospects of a future Labour Party." Higgs, a member of the Central Executive Council of the Labour Leagues, moved that "the party should reunite and vote solidly on all questions comprising the Labour platform, reserving the right to vote on the fiscal question and on any other question not provided for in the Labour platform, according to their convictions." A long and disorderly discussion followed, in which many members of the parliamentary party took part, but the Conference broke up without anything being settled. This meeting was followed a week later by the Conference of the Labour Electoral Leagues just referred to, and it was evident that the delegates were taken with the idea of controlling the parliamentary Labour Party. That party, as we have seen, was hopelessly at variance over the fiscal question; so indeed

were the delegates of the Leagues, but this fruitful cause of strife was disposed of to their satisfaction by a unanimous declaration that "the only satisfactory settlement of the fiscal question was by means of a plebiscite." Turning its attention to the parliamentary party, the Conference decreed that it was the duty of the Labour Party to support whatever Government might be in power, at the same time this support was to be given only on condition that "a good portion of the Labour platform" was carried into law.

The attempt of the executive of the Labour Leagues to unite the parliamentary party had come to nothing; the executive of the Trades and Labour Council next essayed the task, the two executives being now at open war. The members of the party were invited to meet the Trades and Labour Council's executive on 6th February 1892, and Trenwith, leader of the Victorian Labour Party, was invited to be present in order to act as mediator should his services be required. Ten members of the parliamentary party attended, five from each of its two sections. All who attended admitted the urgency of the call for union, and Trenwith was empowered to draw up a scheme which would serve as a basis of reconciliation and agreement. This was submitted to the parties a few days later. It provided: "(1) That on all essential points in connexion with the Labour platform, to which all the members of the party subscribed at the last election, members shall act in such a manner as may from time to time be decided upon at meetings of the party, to which all the members shall be invited. (2) That the sinking of the fiscal question shall be held to mean that members of the Labour Party shall not in any way raise it in Parliament. Should, however, the fiscal or any other question not referred to in the Labour platform be introduced by other members of Parliament, each member of the Labour Party shall be at liberty to act as seems to him best in connexion therewith." This basis of agreement was at once accepted by the Protectionists, but the other section declined it and submitted a resolution "That as hitherto no disposition has been shown by any

member of the party to vote against the Labour platform, the interests of Labour will be best conserved by trusting that the party's feelings of loyalty to Labour will cause them to exert every influence to legalize those measures which embody the principles of the platform without imposing further restrictions or returning to those relations likely to result in irritation or further dissension." A week later a general meeting of the parliamentary party was held, about twenty members attending, and both sections being well represented. Proposals for reunion were again considered, but none of them were found acceptable, and the meeting separated after having agreed that McGowen should call together the members of the party, when any question affecting Labour legislation was before Parliament.

The fiscal question was not of course settled by the passing of the tariff; it cropped up in and out of Parliament, and it seemed impossible for the party to escape from it, except on the intrusion of an issue of still greater importance from the standpoint of Labour. The occurrence of the great strike at Broken Hill in 1892, when the mine-owners determined to smash the trade unions of the district, by raising a question of vital importance to the Labour movement, seemed to be such an issue and afford an excellent opportunity for a reunion of the party. The strike leaders were arrested on 15th September 1892, and on the same day Reid moved his second vote of censure on the Government. No mention was made by Reid in his speech of the troubles at Broken Hill, but the question could not be avoided. Dibbs had dealt very firmly with the situation which had arisen there; he had superseded the stipendiary magistrate of the town, and had sent in his place another officer deemed capable of dealing with any situation that might arise on the mining-fields. He had arrested the strike leaders, sent up a strong contingent of police to overawe the strikers, and given all the support of his position to the employment of non-union workers in place of those on strike. He had, therefore, committed all possible offences against the militant Labour

Party. The parliamentary Labour Party had now an opportunity of punishing him in an effectual way by voting for the motion of censure.

Cann, in whose electorate the Broken Hill mines were situated, moved an addition to Reid's motion, condemning the Government's administration of the law at Broken Hill. It was well understood that Cann's amendment would be thrown out; to vote for it therefore would not injure Dibbs, and the Labour members who wished to stand well with their constituents by condemning Dibbs for his "cruel and tyrannical action" towards the Broken Hill strikers, and at the same time to continue him in office on account of their desire to ensure a continuation of the protective system with which he was identified, were able to speak freely and vote for Cann's amendment without misgiving. When the division was taken the Government had a majority of 99 to 37; of the minority 27 were Labour members and in the majority were included 7 who had originally belonged to the party and who intended, by their vote, to advertise the fact that they had now definitely severed their connexion with it. After the division on Cann's amendment had been taken the House proceeded to vote on Reid's original motion, which was lost, the Government having a majority of 4 in a House of 132 members. Four of the supporters of the Government were prominent Labour members, Fitzgerald, Kelly, Johnston, and Sharp, and notwithstanding that these members had voted for Cann's amendment, they were accounted as renegades from the Labour cause.

The division on Reid's motion was taken on 30th September 1892; five days later a special meeting of the executive of the Labour Electoral Leagues was held, when very bitter speeches were made denouncing the action of the four members in supporting the Government, and a motion was passed declaring that these members "had shown an utter disregard for the constituents who had returned them to Parliament, and they were to be looked upon by all democrats as traitors to the cause of Labour."

The next night (6th October) the Trades and Labour Council met, and a motion was carried declaring Fitzgerald, Kelly, Johnston, and Sharp unworthy of the confidence of the workers, and repudiating them as Labour representatives. It was also declared that these four members had done more harm to the cause of the workers than the greatest conservative or capitalist had done, and delegates were called upon to "hound them down upon every possible occasion." This outburst was in a sense a sincere expression of opinion, but it is likely there was in it a greater degree of animosity to the persons condemned than of genuine principle, as when Reid again moved a motion of want of confidence three months later the whole of the Protectionist members were on the side of the Government, and this action was at a subsequent date cordially endorsed by the Labour Leagues.

The second annual Conference of the Labour Electoral Leagues was held on 26th January 1893, J. C. Watson, chairman of the Trades and Labour Council, presiding. It was immediately decided—

1. That the Labour Party shall be a distinct party, and not be allied to any other party.
2. That this Conference shall define the sinking of the fiscal issue, to come into force at the next General Election.
3. That sinking the fiscal question shall mean that Labour members elected to Parliament shall support any Government that would give Labour measures, and should vote as a solid party until the fiscal question should be settled by the people at a referendum.

This was a triumph for the Protectionist element of the Leagues, and enabled the Labour Protectionists in Parliament to support the Dibbs Government as they wished to do, without incurring the penalty of "being hounded down upon every possible occasion," awarded to the four members who had voted with that Government four months earlier, for which vote one of them (Sharp)

had been recently expelled from membership by the Redfern branch of the League. Following upon these decisions the Conference declared—

“That the Labour Party in Parliament expel any members from that party who do not abide by the rule of the majority of the caucus,” and

“That legislative provision should be made to enable a constituency to remove a representative in the Legislature who has lost their confidence.”

The Government, having safely met Reid's two motions of want of confidence, felt it had nothing more to fear than an occasional close division, and even when on 3rd February 1893 Parkes moved in committee certain resolutions censuring the financial methods of the Treasurer, the Ministry was not greatly disturbed, although its majority was only three. The confidence of the Government was based on assurances directly received from its Labour supporters.

On all party questions the Labour members were irreconcilably divided: those of them who supported the Government claiming that they did so in order that they should not lose the Electoral Bill which was then before the Council, having left the Assembly in a shape approved by the Labour Party; those who supported the Opposition claiming that the Assembly was, as then constituted, incapable of carrying on the business of the country, and should therefore be dissolved without further delay.

The Labour Electoral Leagues, as we have seen, had in October 1892 anathematized four members for their support of the Government, while a number of strike leaders at Broken Hill were under arrest; five months later the situation had changed only so far that the arrested men had been convicted and were “languishing in prison,” and the Government itself was absolutely unrepentant, and had declined, in spite of very pressing representations from the Labour side, to reverse the verdict of the jury. It was therefore with great surprise that the public read an announcement in the Press that the executive of the

Labour Leagues had met shortly after the Parkes resolutions had been defeated, and decided that the parliamentary party should be urged to leave the Government in power, not, of course, because it was a Protectionist Government, but "in order that several measures, that would benefit Labour and were included in the Labour platform, might be passed into law as early as possible." A deputation from the Leagues waited upon the parliamentary party and pressed it to give united support to the Government. The majority of the party had consistently opposed the Dibbs Government from its first entry into power, and naturally received this advice with impatience; those especially who had recently been conspicuous in their denunciation of the Government as "tyrannical tools of capital" accepted the invitation, if not command, to stultify themselves in the eyes of their constituents, with ill-suppressed resentment. There was, however, no open breach with the Labour League Executive, although the opponents of the Dibbs regime were made more resolute than ever for a dissolution. Shortly after these events the banking crisis fell upon Australia, and until that had passed off political warfare was not indulged in to any great extent, but with the resumption of normal conditions there was no approach to a reunion of the scattered forces of Labour in Parliament. The majority still opposed the Government, and the two factions of the party remained irreconcilable, although the Electoral Bill had now become law, and there was nothing therefore but their own differences to prevent the forcing of the Government to a dissolution.

The parlous condition of the Labour Party was a source of great anxiety to the prominent Labour leaders outside Parliament, but it was generally recognized that the disputes within the parliamentary circle, loud as they sometimes were, merely echoed the louder controversies of the Leagues themselves. In June 1893 there was a large public meeting in Sydney to celebrate the second anniversary of the election which brought Labour into Parlia-

ment, and at this meeting the case of Labour unity was warmly advocated. The blame of disunion was attributed largely to the Leagues, and distrust of their chosen representatives and religious sectarianism were named as the vital causes of the low esteem into which the party had fallen. Following this meeting a good deal of friendly pressure was exercised upon the parliamentary party to reunite in view of the approaching elections. This was so far successful that a meeting was held on 12th October 1893, when an arrangement was come to under which a number of those who had broken away were allowed to return to the fold. The party was at the time practically leaderless, and it was made a condition of the reunion that Joseph Cook should be made leader. A meeting was accordingly held on 17th October, attended by twenty-five members. Cook was unanimously elected, and the Labour Party was declared to be re-formed. Eleven members of the original party refused to join the new party or were refused admission thereto; of these six were of the nine who broke away in 1891, and five amongst those who left the party in the December following. The reconstituted party was soon joined by Fitzgerald and Kelly, two of the four members who had incurred the resentment of the Labour organizations by voting for the Dibbs Government on 30th September 1892; the other two, Sharp and Johnston, refused to join the party, according to their own account, or were refused admission, according to the version of their opponents.

There was little the reunited party could do during the remainder of its parliamentary existence. The regular Opposition was willing to await the dissolution, which could not be delayed beyond July 1894, and the time available was not more than required by the Labour Party to prepare itself for the elections. Cook's short term of leadership was, from a parliamentary point of view, quite uneventful; the reconstituted party acted together and occasionally showed its power, but no serious question affecting Labour arose in Parliament. The Labour Electoral Leagues now

busied themselves in preparation for the elections, which were expected to be held in the early part of the following year, and on 9th November 1893 a conference of delegates from the various electoral leagues and trade organizations was held in Sydney to settle sundry necessary preliminaries. Nearly two hundred delegates attended. The quarrels of the parliamentary Labour Party naturally received a considerable share of attention. Of the thirty-six members elected on the Labour "ticket" in June 1891, twenty-three were recognized by the Conference as still genuine Labour representatives, and on the second meeting day one of the members, inspired by the parliamentary party, proposed that "the Conference recommends to all Labour Leagues to devise some means of healing the unhappy breach now existing between them and Messrs. Sharp, Kelly, Fitzgerald, and Johnston, M.s L.A." This proposal was followed by a long and acrimonious discussion, some speakers pleading earnestly for a general act of oblivion, while the majority denounced the Dibbs Government as tyrants, maintained in power by the votes of the four members whose conduct was being discussed, who were generally referred to as traitors to the sacred cause of Labour. As a matter of strict accuracy this statement was absurd, for the Dibbs Government, on various critical occasions after the 30th September 1892, was supported by five other Labour members, including McGowen, who was until the recent reunion of the party its quasi-leader, and all the party might plead, in justification of any vote given in favour of Dibbs, that in March 1893 the members were specially enjoined to support the Government by the executive committee of the Leagues. The proposal was, however, defeated by a large majority, which decreed that "the four deserters should be treated with undying hostility."

As the Conference warmed to its work, the parliamentary Labour Party was subjected to much unfriendly criticism for not having sunk the fiscal question, and it was contended that, had it not been for the split in the party over

that question, many reforms urgently demanded by Labour would have been accomplished. The central executive of the Leagues recognized that the fiscal question could not be sunk, and, wishful to protect the parliamentary party, the difficulties of whose position it clearly recognized, put up W. A. Holman, who had already won a prominent position in the Labour ranks, to move a motion on its behalf. This was: "That in the opinion of this Conference there can be no objection to any candidate who runs in the Labour interest declaring, where he deems it advisable, his present convictions on the fiscal or any other question; but that no candidate who gives any pledge to the electors to vote on this question in any way except according to the decision of the parliamentary Labour Party in caucus should be recognized as a Labour member." Speaking for the executive committee of the Leagues, Holman claimed that it would be impossible to ignore the fiscal controversy, because the electorate would not have it ignored; and the Labour members, who were present, were in general agreement that the question of Free Trade and Protection would overshadow all other issues at the coming elections, and to pretend that there was no such question would probably mean loss of votes to the Labour Party. The parliamentary representatives received little courtesy at the hands of the Conference, and in spite of their very strong opposition Holman's motion was amended so that it read: "That in the opinion of this Conference there can be no objection to any candidate who runs in the Labour interest declaring *to the caucus*, . . ." etc. The effect of this pronouncement was to prevent any Labour member mentioning the fiscal question during the election, and after the election it required him to accommodate his opinion to that of the majority of the caucus.

Having disposed of the fiscal question, the Conference proceeded to consider the pledge to be exacted from candidates chosen by the Leagues, and finally the following formulæ were agreed to :

- (a) "That a parliamentary Labour Party to be of any weight must give a solid vote in the House upon all questions affecting the Labour platform, the fate of the ministry, or calculated to establish a monopoly or confer further privileges on the already privileged classes, as they arise," and
- (b) "That accordingly every candidate who runs in the Labour interest should be required to pledge himself not only to the fighting platform and the Labour platform, but also to vote on every occasion specified in clause (a) as the majority of the parliamentary Labour Party may in caucus decide."

The sitting members of the Labour Party found it very hard to reconcile themselves to these decisions, and when the Conference closed and they had leisure to consider their position, the majority of them were disposed to refuse the pledge. Another dangerous split in the party was thus probable. To avoid this, another conference was summoned on 10th March 1894 for the purpose of hearing what the dissentients had to say, and of discussing and modifying the form of pledge already adopted, if this course were found to be desirable. The questions that had agitated the November Conference were again discussed, and the same absence of consideration was shown to the opinions of the parliamentary representatives. Again the Solidarity Party emerged triumphant. The form of pledge remained unaltered. It was fully expected by the Conference, and indeed by the public generally, that this decision would at once cause a split in the parliamentary party, and that the majority would hasten to put themselves under the wing of the central committee of the Leagues, but though a few members were willing to abide by the decision of the Conference and sign the pledge required of them, the majority, including the strongest and ablest of the party, were not so minded. They had no objection to signing a specific pledge to support the whole of the planks of the Labour platform, but they demanded reasonable freedom in the exercise of their other parlia-

mentary duties. They condemned the Conference pledge as being unworkable, as it would be impossible for the Labour members in the House to agree amongst themselves as to what were questions "calculated to establish a monopoly" or "to confer further privileges on the already privileged classes," and even what were questions "affecting the Labour platform" was a matter open to dispute.

The parliamentary members who were in a position to do so lost no time in getting into touch with their local Leagues and their constituents generally. The result of these consultations was to confirm them in their decision to oppose the central executive, and the issue on 24th April 1894 of a long and important manifesto to the electors of the colony. This was signed by Joseph Cook on behalf of the party, and appeared in the leading Sydney newspapers. Its principal points were :

- That* in the opinion of the party the pledge agreed to at the Conference was both absurd and impracticable and calculated to thwart the desires of the workers ;
- That* it was impossible to determine what would affect "the fate of a ministry," or what was "monopoly," or "privilege," and what was not ;
- That* the leaving a member free to vote on "minor questions" was contradictory, because a ministry was more often affected by "minor" than by "major" questions ;
- That* parliamentary experience had proved the utter impossibility of framing any description of mechanical rules which would in themselves secure loyalty and solidarity of action in Parliament ;
- That* the pledge destroyed the representative character of a member and abrogated the electoral privileges of a constituency ;
- That* the effect of the pledge had already been to drive from the Leagues some of the staunchest members of the party, who were now called traitors because they refused to be slaves.

The publication of the manifesto created a great uproar in Labour circles. Big meetings were held in the Public Domain in Sydney on the Sunday following its appearance ; at these resolutions were carried condemning "the action

of a section of the parliamentary Labour Party in defying the workers by refusing to sign the pledge of solidarity demanded by the Labour Leagues, and by issuing a manifesto to the public." The conduct of the party was also denounced as being "detrimental to the best interests of the Labour movement," and the manifesto was alleged to be "a clear declaration of war, after the publication of which nothing remained but to fight the men who signed it as traitors to Labour."

The official reply to the parliamentary party was made by J. C. Watson, who was now President of the Trades and Labour Council. He contended that the pledge required from Labour candidates for the new Parliament was less stringent than that proposed in July 1891 by the Labour members themselves, and that of January 1892 adopted by the Labour Conference. These pledges bound a member to vote on all occasions according to the decision of the majority in caucus, whereas the new pledge was confined to three groups of questions, viz. those included in the Labour platform, those affecting the position of a Ministry, and those calculated to establish further monopolies; on all other questions a candidate might consider himself unpledged. Watson declared that the real question at issue was the unity of the party, the parliamentary representatives claiming that each League should deal with its own representative as to the pledge it should exact, whereas the Conference required that the pledge should be the same for all candidates, as in the absence of uniformity in regard to the pledge a united Labour Party would be impossible. Watson concluded a press interview by saying, "The central committee representing the Leagues having made every endeavour to bring about a settlement, I don't see any other course open but to carry war into every electorate. The pledge is simply to prevent a split in the party, and would not have been insisted upon but for the fact that the present members did not work solidly without it. The statement of Labour members that questions of monopoly and class privileges cannot be determined

is simply quibbling. Every one knows that we refer to such matters as the Australasian Rights Purchase Bill, upon which we think a solid vote of the Labour members should be given."

Cook replied to the central committee at a meeting of the Lithgow Labour League. He claimed that "no pledge would make a crooked man straight, and if a man were straight he did not need to be shackled with a pledge. It was an entirely undemocratic movement. Every elector before giving his vote had a right to know how the privilege would be used, but this the pledge forbade. They wanted more Labour members, not fewer, and that could only be done by leaving a candidate free to enter into representative arrangements with his constituents." Cook's statement of the position taken up by the parliamentary party was very well received by his constituents and by the local Labour League; nevertheless it was absolutely inconsistent with the idea underlying the formation of the Labour Party and with the conduct of the parliamentary party itself.

For the first few months after the elections of 1891 the idea of majority rule was the supremacy of the Labour Party in Parliament over its members; but after the first Conference of the Labour Electoral Leagues this idea was contested, and the executive of the Labour Leagues claimed that majority rule meant submission to the will of labour as a whole, and as the voice of labour could be distinctly heard only at a Labour conference, such a conference had the right of determining what the party programme should be, and of overlooking the work of those who represented the Leagues in Parliament. The Conference of the Leagues claimed a certain supremacy over the parliamentary party, and, as a corollary, the right of determining whether that party or any of its members had failed in obedience to the principles of Labour either as an industrial factor or as a political organization. When this claim was fully developed the members of the parliamentary party naturally found themselves in a position of no small difficulty. They had,

it is true, been selected by the various branches of the Labour Electoral League to contest each his own particular electorate, but in many, indeed in most, cases these branches were very small bodies, and a candidate for Parliament, having received the imprimatur of the local League, at once addressed himself to the wider circle of his electorate and issued a manifesto, which, while accepting the platform of the League with its "sixteen planks," made promises to the electors on various subjects not covered by those planks. To surrender the right to say whether these promises should be honoured or not was what the majority of the party could not prevail upon themselves to do. It was considerably debated whether the duty of a member of Parliament was to himself alone, to the body of the electors by whom he was chosen, to the local League which had selected him as a candidate, or to the party as a whole as represented by the annual Conference of the Leagues. In these discussions it was found that a considerable proportion of the Labour members themselves were disposed to look upon the electorate and the local Leagues as one body, and to deny the right of any other body, however constituted, to call upon them to surrender their judgment and their conscience to its keeping. In denying the authority of the Conference the dissentients were illogical, inasmuch as the Electoral Leagues, to which they did not deny allegiance, were by their constitution bound to conform to the decisions of the annual Conferences; and their claim that any pledge at all was a shackle upon their freedom as representatives of the people at large was inconsistent with the conduct of the majority of them, who, as we have seen, sought at their very first meeting to exact a pledge binding members admitted to the councils of the party "to vote in the House as the majority of the party sitting in caucus has determined." This pledge, it is true, had been ill observed, and several members rather than conform to it had quitted the party, but its enforcement was strongly desired by the most prominent of the party now at variance with the central committee.

The parliamentary party's grievance against the central committee and the annual Conference had more behind it than the taking of the pledge. At the various meetings of these bodies the Labour members, individually and collectively, had been subjected to very coarse abuse; their honour had been impugned, the *bona fides* of their attachment to the Labour cause had been called in question, and, worst of all, in nearly every electorate there was some one already prepared to snatch from the sitting member the endorsement of the local Labour League, without which no one could claim to be an official Labour candidate.

As a counter-move to the manifesto of the parliamentary party the central committee prepared and forwarded a circular to each of its branches, stating that no candidate would be recognized who did not show his *bona fides* by accepting and signing the pledge endorsed by the Conference of March 1894. But the Trades and Labour Council, not giving up all hope of preserving the unity of the party, decided in its capacity of founder of the Labour Leagues to endeavour to mediate between the two parties. The parliamentary party met on 26th April, and a letter from the Trades and Labour Council was read asking for the names of the members who had signed the manifesto, with a view to reconciling them with the central committee. Somewhat to its surprise the Council learned that the document had been signed by nineteen members, viz. Bavister, Black, Cann, G. D. Clark, Cotton, Danahey, Darnley, Edden, Fegan, Fitzgerald, Gardiner, Houghton, Hindle, Langwell, Nicholson, Rae, Williams, Cook, and Dr. Hollis; and in a letter to the Council Cook went on to state that "thirteen other members elected on the Labour platform had, by public declaration and other means, refused to sign the Labour Electoral Leagues pledge, Davis, Kirkpatrick, and McGowen were the only members of the party who were understood to be willing to sign the pledge."

On receiving intimation of the Trades and Labour

Council's desire to mediate, the parliamentary party did not relax its efforts to convince the electorate of the strength and correctness of its position. Accordingly it was arranged that there should be a series of public meetings in the principal electorates, at which the points at issue between it and the central committee of the Leagues should be explained. Following on this arrangement a great public meeting was held in the Sydney Domain on Sunday 29th April, at which G. Black spoke in defence of the manifesto and answered the criticism of J. C. Watson and others. Black was personally popular with the rank and file of the party, and an excellent speaker who had defended the Labour movement both in Parliament and in the Press with marked ability. The choice was therefore a good one, but the effectiveness of Black's opposition to the pledge was marred by the fact that it was well known it was he who had proposed that, in order to secure the solidarity of the Labour Party in Parliament, the members should pledge themselves to vote as the majority of the party sitting in caucus should determine. This, of course, was far more drastic than required by the central committee, whose pledge only required members to follow the decision of the caucus on questions affecting the Labour platform, the fate of the Ministry, and monopolies and privileges. Black received a patient hearing from a huge crowd, and proposed a resolution in favour of allowing each local League to select its own candidate and of drawing up the pledge which that candidate should sign, such pledge to be not inconsistent with that of the Conference of March 1894. The central committee put up Holman and W. M. Hughes to state the case for it, and an amendment to Black's motion was proposed, to the effect "that this meeting having heard Mr. Black's defence of the Labour Party's manifesto deems that it is destructive of solidarity." This amendment was carried, and thus the first and principal of the series of meetings gave the parliamentary party plain indication that Labour feeling in Sydney was decidedly against it.

Meanwhile the Trades and Labour Council had appointed three mediators, P. J. Brennan, F. Brennan, and J. Wilson, and for the moment the prospects of a reconciliation being effected were not discouraging. Speaking on behalf of the parliamentary Labour Party, Cook said "he saw no reason why an amicable understanding could not be arrived at, but he was convinced that it could only be by a drastic modification of the pledge. He had no objection to a pledge as such, and was certain that the whole of the present members would not object to sign a pledge which simply bound them to vote in favour of the whole of the planks of the Labour platform, but if the present pledge were insisted on, it would be the means of losing many seats for Labour."

It will be seen from this that the parliamentary party had abandoned its attitude of resistance to any pledge, and this encouraged the mediators of the Trades and Labour Council to proceed with their mission. They had several consultations with the Labour members, the result of which was that they were able to go to the central committee and ask it to accept a modified form of pledge, which omitted the clause requiring a solid vote on all questions affecting monopoly or class privilege. The central committee was at first inclined to take a very hostile view of the proposal, but eventually came round to the opinion that it would be better, in order to prevent the disunion of the party at the approaching elections, to recommend the various Leagues to adopt a modified pledge, on condition that the parliamentary party first endorsed it.

The parliamentary party then met and drew up a pledge which it thought would meet the case. This was signed by Cook as chairman of the party and brought up at a meeting of the central executive on 23rd May 1894. The committee had had a fortnight to consider the decision come to at its previous meeting and had discovered that the annual Conference was the highest Labour authority, and it was therefore beyond the committee's power to

vary the decision arrived at on 10th November 1893, which was confirmed on 10th March 1894. Accordingly a resolution was adopted :

That the Central Committee of the Labour Electoral Leagues, whilst regretting the failure of the efforts of the mediators to heal the breach between the Labour members and the Leagues, declines to take any further action in the matter of the pledge until such time as a proposition in conformity with the constitution is forthcoming from the Labour members.

This resolution meant a postponement of further consideration of the pledge until after the elections, as the matter could not be brought forward constitutionally until the next meeting of the annual Conference of the Leagues, which in the ordinary course would not be held until January 1895. The parliamentary party was therefore at an impasse, and if the branch Leagues supported the central committee there was nothing for Cook and those who supported him but submission, or a severance of their connexion with the official Labour movement. To make sure of its position, the central committee sent a circular letter to each League asking it to endorse the pledge drawn up by the Conference of November 1893 ; at the same time the Trades and Labour Council caused a letter to be sent to each member of the parliamentary party, asking what attitude he intended to assume in regard to the pledge. On 6th June 1894 a meeting of the central committee was held to consider any replies that had then been received. The representative of the Trades and Labour Council reported that only three members of Parliament, McGowen, Davis, and Kirkpatrick, had consented to the "solidarity pledge," the remaining twenty-two had not definitely replied, but about half of them, it was understood, were willing to submit to the pledge required of them. The response of the branch Leagues was very definite. There were in all 84 branches : of these 72 endorsed the pledge, 8 had not replied to the circular letter, while 4 declared that they required no pledge

from their nominees. The four recalcitrant Leagues were Ashfield, Glebe, Darlington, and Hartley; these were immediately declared to be "bogus," and steps were taken to establish new branches in opposition to them.

The Trades and Labour Council now dropped the rôle of mediator and informed Cook, as leader of the parliamentary party, that only those who accepted the pledge would be regarded as belonging to the Party, and Cook made the breach complete by his reply. He declared that the action taken by the central committee of the Leagues and the Trades and Labour Council "was an insidious attempt to break up the party . . . the best guarantee of a member's loyalty to a future party was to be sought in his loyalty to the present one . . . the action of the Council boded ill for the solidarity and loyalty of any future parliamentary party that might be returned"; and he concluded by saying, "I regard your action as discreditable to the last degree."

The election was fixed for 17th July 1894, and the interval was filled up by the Solidarity Party with denunciations of the Independent Labour Party, the members of which were ordinarily spoken of as "traitors and black-legs"; these compliments they reciprocated. The Independent Party was not in a position to undertake a campaign for the propagation of its ideas; for the most part its members contented themselves with fighting each for his own hand, and in very few electorates, not more than eight altogether, did candidates other than members of the late Parliament offer themselves as Independent Labour candidates. On the other hand, the Solidarity Party put forward 70 candidates, of whom only the three who had written to the Trades and Labour Council, and J. H. Cann, who had now left the Independent Labour Party, were former members.

The Leagues looked forward with some confidence to the result of the elections now that the property vote had been abolished, and their candidates contested all the metropolitan seats save one, and most of the country seats

where population was at all dense. Only fifteen of their candidates were returned, including the four ex-members, and only in one case did their nominee successfully oppose a member of the late Parliament belonging to the Independent Labour Party. The Independents succeeded in returning twelve members, of whom ten belonged to the late Parliament and two were new to political life. Nine of the eleven Independent Labour members who lost their seats were displaced by Free Traders, one by a Protectionist, and one by a Labour League candidate. The Free Traders won 58 seats, the Protectionists 40 seats, and these, with 15 "Solidarities" and 12 "Independent Labourites," made up the new Assembly. With this election closes the first phase of the history of the Labour Party, and at this point it will be convenient to leave the narrative, so far as New South Wales is concerned, as the further history of labour in politics belongs to the next period.

VICTORIA

Much more consideration had been given to social and labour legislation in Victoria than in New South Wales, where the see-saw contests between Parkes and Robertson, and the early intrusion of sectarianism into the field of politics, had diverted attention from pressing problems of reform. The advanced Radicalism of Graham Berry during the 'seventies satisfied the aspirations of the labouring classes and won from them a consistent support. But there had been Radicals before Berry; Charles Jardine Don, as we have seen, had been elected for Collingwood in 1859, and Wilson Gray, who got into Parliament some years later, was looked upon as a Labour representative, while Duncan Gillies first entered politics with the support of the diggers of Ballarat, who subscribed the money required to meet his election expenses. During the boom period following 1879 the labouring classes seemed to lose interest in industrial politics, and during a considerable portion of this period the workers were sharply divided

over the schools question, sectarianism being the chief stock-in-trade of several of the most prominent and successful of their political leaders. The Parliament of 1889, however, contained two members who owed their position entirely to Labour votes: Dr. W. Maloney and W. A. Trenwith, and a third was added in April 1891, when John Hancock won a by-election at Collingwood. Hancock was elected on a definitely Labour platform drawn up by a local electoral committee, being the first member of the Victorian Parliament to be so elected. The boom was now over, and the working classes were suffering from the reaction following the financial excesses of the period. They had seen the failure of the maritime strike, and were in the mood to listen to the advice of their leaders—and, for that matter, of their opponents also—to turn to Parliament for the redress of their grievances. Shortly after the election of Hancock for Collingwood a conference of the Labour organizations of the colony was called by the Trades Hall Council of Melbourne, to consider a proposal for the formation of a League embracing all the Labour interests of Victoria. The Conference was attended by representatives of the Trades Councils of Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, and Bendigo, and of the Amalgamated Miners' Association, the Shearers' Union, and the Social Democratic Federation. There was a general agreement as to the need for a political union comprehending all organized labour, but in choosing a title for the new organization the word "Labour" was omitted, and it was designated the Progressive Political League. The idea paramount in the mind of the Conference was that Labour could not win an election without the aid of that numerous body of electors which, though not belonging to recognized trade unions, was yet sympathetic with Labour. The Conference drew up a comprehensive platform of twenty separate planks or articles, grouped under the four headings of (a) electoral reform; (b) reform of the Labour laws; (c) social reform; and (d) Australian federation. The platform, like that of the

New South Wales Trades and Labour Council of the same date, shows no sign of the influence of Lane and his Socialist following, but in its omission of all reference to the tariff question and the inclusion of a provision for "a tax on land values, exclusive of improvements, sufficient to secure for the community the unearned increment," the influence of the disciples of Henry George is evident. As for the tariff question, the omission was not of importance. Victoria had adopted a Protective system which was not likely to be disturbed. Politically, the cause of Free Trade was dead, and could not therefore become a disruptive force in Labour circles, notwithstanding the intellectual influence of the single-taxers.

The platform as decided upon by the Conference was submitted for ratification to the various organizations represented, and was adopted as it stood by all except the Amalgamated Miners' Association, which demanded the addition of another plank requiring all Labour candidates to pledge themselves to the maintenance of the Education Act, that is to say, of public instruction, free, secular, and compulsory. The question of the exclusion of all religious instruction from the State schools of the colony had been discussed with great bitterness, and decided by an overwhelming majority in favour of a purely secular system. The Roman Catholics, who formed more than one-fifth of the population of the colony, had long ceased to agitate for a reversal of this decision, resigning themselves to the establishment of their own separate schools. The great majority of the Labour leaders outside the Amalgamated Miners' Association were content to let the dispute be forgotten. In any case they knew from experience that the Labour movement had suffered more from the intrusion of sectarianism into politics than from any other cause, and they decided that they could not purchase the adhesion of the miners at the price demanded; that powerful body remained therefore unconnected with the new League, much to the disadvantage of both parties.

The Progressive Political League had now nearly nine

months to prepare for the elections which were to be held in April 1892. The work of organization was at once undertaken, and branches formed throughout the country, but the Labour leaders were not a little disappointed with the poor impression they made outside Melbourne and the larger towns. The elections resulted in the return of ten Labour men in a House of ninety. Melbourne and its suburbs returned seven members, and the other three were elected by Stawell, Warrnambool, and Dundas, important provincial towns; no purely agricultural or pastoral constituency returned a Labour member, and no mining district except Stawell.

The election took place at a time when the building and investment societies were falling to the ground. This operated against the success of Labour in the cities, where it was popularly credited with antagonism to the financial institutions then existing, and for this reason thought a dangerous recipient of power at a time of grave difficulty; while the absence of support from the Amalgamated Miners' Association affected the party to the extent of four or five seats in the mining constituencies. The policy of reform as put forward by the Victorian Labour Party awoke no great enthusiasm in the popular mind, and in this respect differed greatly from the gospel of Labour preached in New South Wales and Queensland. In Victoria no burning reforms were proposed, and never did the eloquence of the orators carry them beyond a list of practical measures, such as would appeal to trade unionists.

At the first meeting of the party it was decided to appoint W. A. Trenwith leader, and further, that the Labour element should remain distinct from the other parliamentary parties, and contract no engagements committing it either to the Government or the Opposition; its policy was, in fact, to be "Measures, not men." The period of Labour's first Parliament in Victoria was one of depression and increasing unemployment; there was also a very large exodus of adult males, chiefly from the

strongholds of the Labour members in and around Melbourne. In these circumstances the Victorian Labour Party was naturally more interested in preventing further deterioration in the economic condition of the working classes than in endeavouring to secure political and social reforms, no matter how the necessity for these was emphasized in its election platform. The chief preoccupation of the Governments that held office during this period, the Shiels Ministry from February 1892 to January 1893, and the Patterson from January 1893 to September 1894, was to balance the finances of the colony and assist in the reconstruction of the monetary institutions ruined or crippled during the financial crisis. The Labour Party, as such, was not greatly concerned with either of these undertakings, except as critics who found in the extravagance of the boom years ample material to illustrate their economic theories.

The Labour Party helped to displace Shiels from office in January 1893, but the new Government had a majority independent of Labour support, and the importance of the party was not increased by the change. During the remainder of the life of the Parliament nothing occurred which could be turned to much advantage by the Labour Party inside the House ; outside, though a seat was lost on account of the death of a member, the Progressive Political League strengthened its position throughout the electorates, especially in Melbourne. The party remained united until the dissolution, but there was no temptation to division ; the fiscal question had ceased to exist in Victoria, and so far as social reforms were concerned, the successive Governments were anxious to show that they could be trusted to deal with these, whether the Labour Party was or was not in being.

Parliament was dissolved towards the end of August 1894, and at the ensuing General Election the Labour Party secured sixteen seats, seven more than at the dissolution. It retained all its seats in the late Parliament ; six of the new members were elected by Melbourne constituencies,

and the seventh by the mining constituency of Sandhurst. The party was unable to make any impression on the pastoral and agricultural districts, and the mining towns in which the Amalgamated Miners' Association was most powerful still held aloof from it.

QUEENSLAND

As we approach the close of the next period it will be seen that the sum total of the kind of legislation commonly called "Betterment" or "Amelioration," obtained in Queensland, was very meagre, and less than that obtained in any of the other colonies. Yet it was in Queensland that the discussion of Labour problems first claimed a considerable share of public attention, and it was there also that such discussions were most energetically carried on. The early disappearance of the fiscal question as a disturbing factor in the political life of Queensland no doubt permitted the earlier appearance of Labour unrest than in the other colonies; and to this fact may also be due much of the very earnest attention that for many years was given in Brisbane to the "social problem." The main focus of opinion in these matters was of course the Press; but the platform, the pulpit, and the assembly-room also gave it prominence, and, before ever a Labour member sat in Parliament, Ministers had actually embarked upon experiments in social reconstruction. The column of sketches dealing with the condition of the labouring classes, which appeared in the Saturday *Evening Observer* between 1883 and 1885, connote a wider interest than the pages of the paper commanded, and these were followed until the end of the 'eighties by the weekly paragraphs of "Sketcher" and of "Forward," detailing items of trade union intelligence. In 1888 a writer calling himself "Rambler" was recording the proceedings and generally praising the progress of the trade societies in the columns of the Brisbane *Telegraph*; in the same newspaper prominence was given to a series of articles, reprinted from the *Week*, in

which the view was put forward that industrial co-operation was a useful palliative for economic injustice; and even in the conservative *Courier* could be found, especially during the early 'nineties, a good deal of space devoted to the subject of European Labour movements.

The prominence given to news of this character and to the academic discussion of socialism indicates the vogue which the question was enjoying with the general public of all shades of opinion. But there were other signs which showed that a new leaven was at work. During the year 1888 a Land Nationalization League made its appearance in Brisbane, associated with the name of Murray Fraser, and in March of that year Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then Premier, made the remarkable statement that he expected much from the recognition of the principle "that a share in the profits of productive Labour belongs of right to the labourer," and that he hoped that the experiment of giving the workmen a personal interest in the success of industrial undertakings in which they are engaged would soon form part of the positive law of the land. His Ministry was already setting on foot arrangements for the establishment of village settlements. The earlier closing of shops had been long advocated in Brisbane, and the movement assumed a practical shape with the formation of an Early Closing Association. This association was supported by a wide area of opinion, much of which was obviously not in sympathy with the general trend of the Labour movement. A great meeting in support of early closing was held in July 1889 at the Brisbane Town Hall, the Mayor being in the chair, and Glassey, who was the principal speaker, had the personal support of five other members of the Assembly, besides sympathetic messages from various prominent men.

Henry George was greeted in Brisbane as one of the most considerable figures of the day; his lectures were eagerly and widely attended, and made a very deep impression on all classes of the population. Almost any one who had a message to deliver could find a hearing. Rütthning

conducted a vigorous campaign on behalf of the co-operative solution, and the *Courier* reported in full his lectures on "Industrial Organization of Employers and Employed, with practical suggestions for Immediate Application." That his scheme was not deemed impracticable may be judged from the "Report of the Co-operative Congress" in Great Britain, which the *Courier* reprinted in July 1891. R  thning's lecturing campaign was so far successful that a society called the Guild of Co-operators was founded, which in October 1891 established the Pioneer Industrial Co-operative Society. A further series of articles from R  thning's pen appeared in the *Courier* on the subject of agricultural communes, and these were at once followed by proposals for the establishment of farmers' co-operative societies. Some village settlements had already been established under the Government Act; the cry now was for more. Something in the idea of the arcadian simplicity of these settlements appealed to the sentimental, and their first developments were watched with kindly eyes. The strong interest taken in these various theories for the reconstruction of society or the better distribution of the fruits of labour, profit sharing, co-operative production, single tax, and the like, must be ascribed in part to the vigorous campaign on behalf of the collectivist ideal, which had been preached in the *Boomerang* as far back as 1886, and in the *Worker* from the first issue of that journal in 1890. Now the editor of the *Boomerang* and of the *Worker*, the contributor to the *Observer* of the Labour sketches that have already been mentioned, the man who wrote at various times as "Sketcher," "Rambler," and above all as "John Miller," was William Lane, the author of all that was idealistic and visionary in the Queensland Labour movement.

Lane, of whom his opponents can speak only in terms of high regard as an honest enthusiast for what he believed to be a good cause, was born in Warwickshire of peasant stock. He came to Queensland by way of America, and for some time was engaged on the staff of the

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Observer, an inconsiderable Brisbane evening newspaper. While thus employed he was able to use the columns of the paper for the discussion of questions connected with the fortunes of the industrial classes. His literary work was graphic to an extreme, and all he wrote was dominated by the idea of the eventual ownership by the community of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Inspired by Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and reinforced by Gronlund's *Co-operative Commonwealth*, Lane's conception of the Labour movement is reflected in the first programme of the Australian Labour Federation, issued in August 1890, and met at once its trial and its condemnation in the forests of Paraguay. The "New Australia" movement has been described by various writers, here it is enough to point out that the ideals put upon their trial in that most famous and most lamentable enterprise, had been preached with great vigour and charm in the pages of the *Boomerang*, which was founded by Lane himself, and later in the *Worker*, of which he became the first editor in 1890.

This aspect of Lane's work, while it is important and, in Australian history, quite unique, has been allowed to overshadow his other important work, which lives in the success of the Australian Labour Party. Whatever may be thought of Lane's wild attempt to realize "Socialism in our Time," the motto inscribed week after week over his articles in the *Worker*, it cannot be denied that the course laid down by him for making the Labour movement an efficient political engine showed a rare appreciation of the position and of the value of the material with which he had to work. His first move was to combat the old friendly society idea of trade unions by giving the workers a new vision of social reconstruction by means of Labour solidarity, and following this he impressed upon his adherents, as an axiomatic truth, that use was to be made of existing institutions; society was to be built up again by means, not of a parliamentary balance, as in New South Wales, but of a parliamentary majority of straight-

out Labour members. By the adoption of these views and methods he avoided in the first place the possibility of trade unions becoming the instrument of the employers in facilitating the organization of production ; and in the second, the possibility of Labour members becoming the mere agents of *amelioration* by attaching themselves, as an extremist wing, to one of the other close parties. Lane the collectivist intransigent and Lane the practical organizer of the trade unions into a solid fighting force are two different men. The following extract from one of his contributions to the Brisbane *Observer* illustrates his practical attitude :

The most striking feature of the Paris International Trades Congress was the prominence given by the Continental delegates to the Socialistic movement. The English delegates' wing deprecated any rash step in this direction, though acknowledging the probability of its being the ultimate solution of the Labour problem. It is well that Mr. Burnett and his delegates thus brought English common sense to bear upon Franco-German theories. However complete those theories may be and however widely they may be acknowledged, as theories, by Liberals of all shades, it must never be forgotten that great reforms are evolved not invoked. That Socialism is the outcome of it all, very few doubt ; but it can result only after centuries of education and growth. When *future generations* feel so disposed, Governments will slowly secure control of the machinery of production and distribution. But, until civilization is thus ripe, it is wisest as well as best to have fair and honest dealings between employers and employed, and not to risk the large share of wealth which the masses already enjoy in a blind struggle for all. But there is where the difference comes in. English Trade Unionism has made the English labourer comfortable and conservative ; the poverty-stricken and unorganized Continental has nothing much to lose, and is therefore ready for a desperate outbreak. These two hard facts will make a quiet pipeful for any thoughtful opponent of Unionism.

It would be idle to pretend that Lane often wrote with such restraint ; but this paragraph, with the very moderate and politic proposals of the Labour candidates in 1888 and

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in 1893 show that Lane knew that his ideal could only be established by a majority in Parliament. His earliest efforts, therefore, were directed towards obtaining that parliamentary majority, and not towards turning society on the instant upside down. It was when he saw that his parliamentary majority would be long delayed, that he hastened to Paraguay to satisfy his desire for the establishment of a Happy Commonwealth, while he himself should live. "To understand Socialism," he wrote in the *Worker*, "is to endeavour to lead a better life, to regret the foulness of our present ways, to desire truth and purity and honesty, to despise this selfish civilization, and to comprehend what living might be." And, having always before his eyes this ideal view of the destiny of Labour, upon the one hand he did his best to educate his followers, so that they might have some sort of vision, by bidding them read each week such books as Gronlund's *Co-operative Commonwealth*, Belfort Bax's *Ethics of Socialism*, Nordau's *Conventional Lies*, Donnelly's *Caesar's Column*, Davidson's *Old Order and the New*, George's *Social Problems*, Kingsley's *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, above all, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; on the other, the very purity of his zeal for so extravagant an ideal forced him as a man of practical sense—and of practical sense he had a fair share—to see that for the moment the political and not the revolutionary method must prevail. It would be a distortion of the truth to suppose that because he thought the millennium might be achieved in Cosmé at once, he was similarly optimistic about the possibility of such an event in Queensland. Indeed his early despairing flight from the Old to a New Australia goes far to prove the contrary.

It is a curious and a singularly dramatic paradox that while there was this fervent discussion of different schemes of social reconstruction, whether it was Lane's Communism, Rütthning's Co-operation, Murray Fraser's Single Tax, or Griffith's Profit Sharing, Queensland should have remained to the end of the period the most politically Conservative of the colonies of the Australasian group. The explana-

tion is, as Métin points out, that in Queensland there was the unique phenomenon of a Labour Party in opposition ; everywhere else it had attached itself to the Government of the day, on the old familiar principle of support in return for concessions, whether these concessions were wrung from straight-out and temperamental Liberals like Kingston and Seddon, or from straight-out Conservatives by temperament like Reid and Lyne.

A consideration of the prevailing atmosphere of party politics will make plain how it came about that there should be this difference in Queensland as compared with the other colonies. Political feeling in Queensland, as contrasted with New South Wales for example, regarded persons rather than platforms. In the Mother Colony during the early 'nineties no politician commanded the certain and stable affection of a wide area of the public mind. Parkes, in his somewhat gross and verbose old age, encountered a generation that had small respect for his narrow and formal constitutionalism. Reid, urbane, rotund, and witty, had captured the humour of the crowd ; but no politician who relies in the last resort upon laughter can be said to be secure. When the five years' Premier took office in 1894 he seemed likely to last for five days, perhaps for five weeks, or with luck for five months. As for Dibbs, whom he displaced, the people were heartily tired of him ; Lyne they did not know well, and did not like what little they knew of him ; Barton was identified with a special and then a somewhat academic plea ; and so the public of New South Wales, uninterested in the men, cast its eyes upon their measures. In Queensland affairs were very different. Politics were little other than a battle royal between two men, both of them distinguished, one rather more genial than acute, the other more acute than genial, but both having a large share of real kindness and sound judgment. McIlwraith had captured the imagination of the people by his action over New Guinea, while Griffith had conducted an administration without discredit to the end of the five years' limit then set to a Queensland Parliament. Griffith

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and McIlwraith represented to Queenslanders all there was of politics at that time in the colony; nevertheless the dictum, men not measures, must not be taken without due limitation. The questions of coloured labour and of land-grant railways also loomed very large in the politics of the colony, but, important as they were, these questions did not establish so complete a barrier between parties as, for instance, the question of Free Trade or Protection in New South Wales or Victoria. One might approve of land-grant railways here, but not there, or of Kanaka labour and not of Chinese. Opinion even on these two principal points was not so straitly bound as was the creed of Lane. When in 1888, for instance, McIlwraith turned out Griffith, it was not a triumph of concessionaires and aliens over a white Queensland financing its own railways; it was a triumph of the returned hero of the 1879-83 administration, who had successfully asked to be given a second tenure of office. The year 1883 itself had provided an illustration of the elastic character of the "concession" question in its effect on the position of parties. At the elections of that year the ultra-squatters, frightened at the wholesale resumption of runs which McIlwraith's land-grant railway schemes seemed to portend, joined with what was superficially the Liberal Party to put out what was, superficially, the party of capitalism and the natural ally of the territorialists. Nor was the coloured races question more constant in its effect. For although a federated and class-conscious Labour electorate might perceive the ultimately injurious effect on the labour market of the importation of cheap labour, yet the employees of the sugar industry, which was chiefly concerned, required a good deal of education in solidarity before they would vote against a measure which would at least make secure their own industry, and possibly give it a much-needed impetus; and that politicians as well as workers could keep an open mind on this question is demonstrated when Griffith executed his amazing *volte-face*, and issued the famous manifesto on South Sea Island labour in 1892. That no

very vital difference existed between the platforms of these two protagonists, these two questions apart, is sufficiently shown by the Coalition of 1890.

During 1893 both Griffith and McIlwraith retired from the stage, Griffith to become Chief Justice, while McIlwraith's continued ill-health obliged him to take a less active part in politics. It was then obvious that McIlwraith had not, after all, made a deep impression on Queensland opinion, while, on the contrary, Griffith's peculiar type of Liberalism clearly dominated and was likely to remain dominant in the politics of the colony. There are two things noteworthy in connexion with Griffith's long administration of 1883-88. The first is that this administration, according to the popular idea, was essentially Liberal in character, contrasting in this regard very favourably with the traditional policy of the McIlwraith connexion; and the second that, so far as Betterment was concerned, while Griffith proposed much, he did little. There was a very great difference between the number of Betterment measures on the Statute Book of New South Wales and those on the Statute Book of Queensland. It was not so much that Reid's five years bore a whole code of rare and refreshing fruit and Griffith's a meagre and shrivelled pittance, but that Reid's liberal policy came as a long-delayed and a fresh thing 'in the 'nineties, while Griffith had exhausted the novelty and restricted the scope of the idea of Liberalism before ever the bitter conflicts of the strike years had begun. We have commented upon the volume of academic discussion in regard to social reconstruction which marked the period under notice, and it would seem a legitimate conclusion that nothing is more fatal to the progress of social amelioration than that social reconstruction should be already in the air.

The anarchy and outrages attending the great strikes were regarded as the direct and necessary outcome of the advocacy by Lane of "Socialism in our time," and the bulk of the people, contemplating the failure of the New Australia, congratulated themselves on their escape from

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a like experiment. They grew disgusted with the academic discussion of projects of social and industrial reform, and for the time being the Liberalism associated with the name of Griffith was dropped ; large numbers were scared into the adoption of a sort of Conservatism, while the remainder, declining to adopt the Betterment proposals which formed the fighting platform of the Labour Party, as a substitute for the old Liberalism, refused that party the parliamentary majority which, on their tactics, they would have to obtain before they could secure the kind of reform that, contemporaneously, the Tory Reid was carrying out across the border. No thought of Betterment legislation, therefore, occurred to the party in power. The events of the preceding years had gradually soldered Conservatives and Liberals together, and the people refused to consider Labour as the new Liberal Party. To Lane it was due that Labour entered the Queensland Parliament, and to him also that, in spite of the fact that the party was opportunistic, not communistic, it remained in opposition. After these general reflections we may now turn to consider the actual facts connected with the entry of labour into the legislative arena.

Lane's contributions to the public press had for their first objective the conversion of the Labour leaders to his views. Like their fellows in the other colonies, they had been concerned, previous to his arrival, with questions of wages and hours of labour, and had given very little real consideration to politics, but when Lane caught their attention in the early 'eighties, he changed their point of view and enlarged their outlook ; thereafter he had little opposition from his own side in his schemes for organizing working-class opinion and imparting to it a tinge of Socialism. Nor did he attempt to conceal the goal towards which his efforts would lead them, and, working unceasingly at his self-appointed task, he was so successful that from 1885 onward there was scarcely a Labour meeting of importance held in Queensland at which a demand for Socialism was not raised.

In March 1888 the Fifth Intercolonial Trade Union Congress was held at Brisbane. It dealt, as usual, with a great variety of subjects, and amongst the more important of these was the question of the direct representation of Labour in Parliament. There was a strong section in favour of immediate action being taken to secure this object, but the Congress was by no means unanimous in the matter. The opposition to immediate action was based on a consideration of the imperfect development of trade unionism in the colony and the necessity of organizing unskilled labour, in order that an appeal for political support should be addressed to the whole body of workers and not merely to the select section enrolled in the unions. In Queensland, as in the other colonies, there was also an idea that until labour was able to produce men of the outstanding ability of Griffith, McIlwraith, and other veteran politicians, an appeal to the constituencies would be made in vain. A General Election was close at hand, and there was little time for preliminary work ; nevertheless, the Trades and Labour Council determined to make the attempt of testing the constituencies in a small way, and at the elections in April 1888 four Labour men were nominated. Of these the electors took very little notice, but Thomas Glassey, who was elected as a supporter of the Government, proclaimed himself a Labour representative in 1892, and almost immediately was joined by J. P. Hoolan, G. J. Hall, and T. J. Ryan, the two last mentioned having obtained seats at by-elections. Hinchcliffe, who was one of the most prominent members of the Labour movement, stood for Toombul but was defeated, and it is clear that the rank and file of the working classes had not grasped the importance of political action and were not prepared to support their leaders in their desire to enter Parliament.

This lack of success in their first political essay did not discourage Lane or the Trades Council. They recognized their defeat at its true value, and during the remainder of 1888 and 1889 very active propaganda work was carried on in every corner of the colony. Lane preached the

brotherhood of man, but everywhere he preached he urged the workers to join the unions and strengthen their fellow-workers in the great struggle for the possession of the legislature. He showed them that it was easier to fight the battle against capitalism on the floor of Parliament than by means of strikes, and so successful was this propaganda that at the beginning of 1889 the shearers, the labourers, and the carriers were organized into strong unions. The work done amongst the shearers was singularly rapid and complete, and by the middle of the year 1889 it would have been difficult to find any regular shearers who were outside the unions. The shearers were all students of Lane's writings; they soon became keen politicians and the most advanced section of the Labour Party, and by their numbers and enthusiasm practically dominated the Labour politics of Queensland.

In June 1889 the Trades and Labour Council ceased to exist, and its work was taken over by the Australian Labour Federation. The promoters of the new union hoped that it would presently develop into a federation embracing the six colonies, and their aspirations in that regard were indicated by the name selected, but, as it happened, the union did not extend beyond the limits of Queensland. The Australian Labour Federation, like the superseded Council, was a federation of trade unions, but it was little imbued with the old trade union ideals, being frankly political and socialistic. The inaugural meeting of the Federation was held at Brisbane on 12th June 1889, when representatives of ten of the town trade unions were present. Subsequently the bush unions and almost all the other trade unions in Queensland became affiliated, and the Australian Labour Federation thus became one of the most powerful Labour bodies in Australia.

In August 1889 the London dock strike occurred, and in Queensland even more than in the other Australian colonies a keen interest was felt in the struggle, an interest not confined to the working classes but extending to all ranks. On 4th September a public meeting, over which

the Mayor presided, was held at Brisbane, to express sympathy with the dock labourers and to devise means for raising money for their support. The strong feeling everywhere enlisted on behalf of the dock labourers exercised a very great influence upon the minds of the Labour leaders in Australia, who did not discriminate too nicely between the position of the London dock labourer and that of the Australian workers. This was especially true in Queensland.

Lane, at the outset of his Australian career, did not hesitate to declare that public opinion, if well informed, must always be on the side of the workers and would be a powerful factor in determining any issue in which they were involved; he regarded the course of the London strike as strongly confirming his opinion. But Lane was too well read in the history of the Labour movement to leave anything to chance, and he used the dock strike as an illustration of his contention that, to appeal to public opinion with effect, it was necessary that "Labour solidarity," as he called it, should be firmly established, and with all the force of sincere conviction and persuasive eloquence he impressed this opinion upon the unskilled workers of Queensland, in order that they should enrol themselves in the army of unionists. Nor did his words fall on deaf ears. During 1889, under his direct influence, the Central Queensland Labourers' Union, comprising labourers and others on the pastoral stations, the Timber Getters' Union, the Queensland Railway Employees' Association, and the North Queensland Carriers' Union were organized, and in each of these a strong body of workers was enrolled; in November 1889 the unskilled workers not included in other unions were brought together under the name of the General Labourers' Union.

All these unions as well as the others brought into being through Lane's efforts were firmly persuaded that it was to Parliament, no less than to trade unionism, that they must look for the satisfaction of their needs, and as a step towards the reaching of their objective, the Western

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shearers formed the Bushmen's and Working Men's Parliamentary Association, which in a few weeks was able to claim an enrolment of five or six thousand members pledged to return Labour candidates to Parliament.

In his efforts to secure the solidarity of Labour Lane was ably seconded. Spence brought about the affiliation of the Queensland Miners' Association with the Amalgamated Miners' Association of Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia; Glassey and Hinchcliffe, as delegates of the Wharf Labourers' Union and the Australian Labour Federation, made their tour of Northern Queensland to urge the necessity for the federation of Labour and for a coalition between skilled and unskilled workers, in order that Labour legislation might be carried forward and Labour attain its proper position. Everywhere they were well received; the local unions agreed to federate with the Australian Labour Federation, and at enthusiastic meetings the programme of Labour was expounded, the existing unions were strengthened, and new ones formed. The *Courier* newspaper spoke of Glassey's "progress through the north" as a "triumph," and undoubtedly it did much to reveal and to increase the strength of the Labour Party in Queensland.

The rapid success of the movement for the organization of the workers of Queensland came as a surprise even to those who had the chief part in carrying it through, but they saw also that it would need a constant effort to maintain the ground thus gained. Amongst the scattered population of the colony it would be impossible to hold frequent meetings by which the new-born enthusiasm might be maintained and reinforced, and at which the marked hostility of the Press might be combated, so Lane determined to establish a Labour newspaper, owned by the trade unions and distributed to all their members. The establishment of such a paper had long been in his thoughts, and he induced the Australian Labour Federation to take the matter up. In December 1889 a meeting of several of the most important trade unions was held at

Brisbane to consider the matter, with the result that on 1st March 1890 the *Worker*, under Lane's own editorship, made its first appearance as a monthly publication. Soon, however, fortnightly issues were made, and in April 1892 it became a weekly paper. The *Worker* proved of very great value to the cause of labour even in the towns, and among the scattered workers of the country districts its influence was enormous. It was almost from the beginning the favourite and very often the sole reading of the bushmen's huts, and it inculcated forcibly and without disguise the form of Socialism which Lane had enthusiastically adopted, and in which he most sincerely believed.

On 1st August 1890, the first annual meeting of the General Council of the Australian Labour Federation was held at Brisbane, and it was reported that the adherents of the Federation already numbered 15,000. The meeting was entirely in the hands of men deeply sympathetic with Lane and his ideals, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the political platform, which was prepared and ordered to be submitted for the consideration of the various district organizations, should be strictly in accordance with those ideals. The message of the General Council which embodied the political aims of the Federation was presumably the work of Lane, and is of such importance to our subject that it is well worth reproducing in full.

The General Council of the A.L.F. recommends to its various districts the consideration of such federated political action as is demanded by the increasing intelligence of the age and the desire for social justice which now moves the workers of the world. Federated political action is a force, the potency of which, if rightly appreciated, is second only to federated social action. All forces must be availed of if it is the purpose of the workers of Australasia to root out those social wrongs which deprive the workers in other lands of all the happiness of living, and already show themselves in this so-called "Paradise" of the working-man. On the social wrongs which the Australian workers already suffer it is not necessary to dilate. While huge fortunes are being amassed by the

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few, the condition of the many is not improving but steadily deteriorating. In every branch of industry concentration is the order of the day, here as in England and America. In every branch of industry the struggle to live is becoming harder and bearing its natural fruit in the extremes of wealth and want. Men wander throughout the country looking for work and not finding it, or wait in the towns for the "good times" which we all know will be followed by another depression. Women are working for miserable wages and often for slavish hours. Even children are being driven to toil nominally to assist their parents, really to make the wealthy wealthier still. And in this contradictory medley of no work and too much work, of toiling children and idle men, of miserable wages and huge fortunes, there is no hope for the worker so long as competition is allowed to stand in the way of true social order. Federate as we will, little indeed can be done so long as industry is conducted solely for the profit of the few, and not for the good of all, so long as society neglects the duty of enforcing social justice and of reforming an industrial system which compels the toiling many to surrender the greater part of their wealth-production to the few.

The General Council is individually and collectively convinced . . . that social misery, poverty, vice, and enmity are the natural fruit of the industrial system as it exists to-day, denying to the workers the liberty to work and live, except by the permission of a class which is permitted to hold for its own advantage the means of production and distribution without which none can live.

And the General Council is further convinced . . . that by industrial reorganization as hereinafter proposed every man and woman would be ensured work, every old person and young person and sick person would be ensured comfort, and every child born into the State would be ensured full opportunity to develop its brain and body as is possible in our civilization, did we only cease to compete one with another.

Therefore this General Council recommends . . . the unions and members of the Federation to authorize its executive to declare that the competitive system is destructive, pernicious, and altogether evil, and must be replaced by a social system which will not leave it in the power of one man to take advantage of the necessities or disabilities of another, and which will provide for all workers opportunity to avail themselves of the bounties of Nature and

to partake fully of the fruits of civilization and to receive the full benefit of their share in the common toil. In the opinion of this General Council such a system is not possible under the present industrial methods, and can only be reached by working together each for all, and all for each, on an equality for the common good, and by thus choking at the fountain-head the social inequalities which are clearly threatening our civilization with utter destruction.

Political Aims of the Federation :

1. The nationalization of all sources of wealth and all means of producing and exchanging wealth.
2. The conducting by the State authority of all production and all exchange.
3. The pensioning by the State authority of all child, aged, and invalid citizens.
4. The saving by the State authority of such proportion of the joint wealth production as may be requisite for instituting, maintaining, and increasing national capital.
5. The maintenance by the State authority from the joint wealth production of all educational and sanitary institutions.
6. The just division among all citizens of the State of all wealth production, less only that part retained for public and common requirements.
7. The reorganization of society upon the above lines to be commenced at once, and pursued uninterruptedly until social justice is fully assured to each and every citizen.

Means towards Political Aims :

The General Council is satisfied that political aims worthy of the A.L.F. are impossible of attainment so long as political power is withheld from the people.

Queensland is so happily situated that a true People's Parliament would certainly be favourable to the reorganization of industry ; yet as Parliaments are at present constituted, the capitalistic minority rules, and has only to express its opinions to have them duly registered. Therefore the General Council recommends the adoption of a People's Parliament platform and the subordination of all other measures to that all-important step. In one year a People's Parliament will give Queensland workers more

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justice than can be wrung from capitalistic Parliaments in a generation.

The People's Parliamentary Platform as drawn up comprised seven planks as follows :

1. Universal white adult suffrage for all parliamentary and local elections ; no plural voting ; no nominee or property qualification chamber.
2. State registration of all citizens as electors.
3. Provision for full and complete enfranchisement of the floating population.
4. All parliamentary elections on one day, and that day to be a close holiday and all public-houses closed.
5. Equal electoral districts on adult population basis.
6. Annual Parliaments.
7. Abolition of veto.

The Socialist objective thus laid down was not, however, to prevent efforts to obtain the eight-hours day for all, and the proposal of Lane with regard to the simultaneous presentation of grievances by all workers, which was known as the "slate," was ratified. No pledge was required as to how an elected representative should vote, but it was provided that "all Labour representatives occupy seats on Opposition cross benches, no matter what party is in power, and previous to election a Labour candidate shall give a written pledge to resign on a requisition signed by a two-thirds majority of his constituents." This latter provision is the first appearance of such a claim on behalf of constituencies and bears evidence of having been hastily inserted, as a little consideration would have shown the framers of the platform that no candidate in Queensland had ever polled two-thirds of the votes possible to be cast in any constituency, and it was not often that two-thirds of the votes on the electoral rolls were cast. However, the idea of having a removable representative was accepted with acclamation and soon made its appearance in the Labour programme of the other colonies.

We have in this manifesto no political platform properly so called ; the parliamentary platform enumerates only

the measures prerequisite to the establishment of a People's Parliament; the political platform merely states an objective. There remained to be drawn up a scheme of organization for the proposed new political party, and this was done before the end of the year.

In the middle of August 1890 the maritime strike broke out and modified profoundly the entire Labour movement. So far as Queensland was concerned the strike ended in October in the unqualified defeat of all who took part in it, and the result was welcomed by the greater part of the Queensland people, who, longing for industrial peace, looked upon the extension of the maritime strike to their colony as pure wantonness. Public opinion being on their side, employers were greatly encouraged to resist all further demands of Labour. Amongst the employers the pastoralists were perhaps the most embittered; they had indeed been little inconvenienced by the strike, but nevertheless at once began to treat the shearers as if they had no right to the slightest consideration. Early in 1891 the men were offered work during the ensuing season on terms which they at once rejected. The struggle which resulted was violent and embittered, and ended in the complete discomfiture of the shearers.

The series of defeats suffered by Labour in Queensland confirmed the more sagacious of the unionists in the opinion that the only hope of success for Labour lay in political action, and the rise of the Labour Party in New South Wales encouraged the expectation that, with good organization, Labour might be adequately represented in the next Parliament. Lane had greatly regretted the maritime strike as completely frustrating his "slate" policy, which appeared to hold out the prospect of a decided success for Labour, and the shearers' strike of 1891 completed his disillusionment. No longer could he dream of a peaceful revolution in Queensland, but, clinging still to his ideal, he determined to seek elsewhere a spot where he could found his perfect commonwealth. He remained in Queensland for some two years longer and continued by his writing

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and speaking to influence the Labour Party, but in the main his enthusiastic activity was directed towards his new project, and the most ardent of his followers determined to leave Queensland with him. In this way the Queensland Labour Party lost at a very critical moment some of its keenest supporters, but at the same time some of its most extreme members, who might have caused serious trouble to the party by their visionary schemes. As it was, the movement remained far more definitely socialistic in Queensland than in either New South Wales or Victoria, but it was more politically practical and less fanatical than it might have been had Lane's New Australian comrades remained in its ranks.

In February 1891, during the progress of the shearers' strike, a meeting was held at Brisbane to urge the formation of a political Labour Party, and, at a similar meeting on 30th April, the Workers' Political Organization was formed, which at once began working steadily to bring a third party into politics. The task of the new organization was rendered comparatively easy, because there was a considerable body of workers who were convinced that the Government had used its power to defeat the shearers and were determined to make such a course impossible in the future. In December 1891 the Workers' Political Organization held a demonstration in Brisbane, at which Trenwith and J. D. Fitzgerald from the neighbouring colonies were present. At its second annual Conference held in August 1892, a fighting platform for the next General Election was drawn up, and an executive appointed to select candidates and collect funds. The platform demanded (1) electoral reform; (2) the control by the State of water conservation and irrigation, the formation of State-aided village settlements, and the establishment of a State bank; (3) a State system of education; (4) the regulation of industry, or the establishment of a State Department of Labour, "to which men can apply for work at a minimum wage as a right," and a Wages Act, giving a lien for wages upon work performed; (5) the repeal of

(a) State-aided immigration, (b) conspiracy laws relating to industrial disputes, and law reform ; (6) the establishment of the referendum.

Electoral reform was given the foremost place, thus following the lead of the Australian Labour Federation, which, at its meeting in the preceding February, had resolved that "it is desirable that at the next general election the whole strength of organized Labour should be concentrated upon the securing of 'one man, one vote,' which should take precedence of all other and be obscured by no other questions. All candidates to pledge themselves to force it through Parliament before discussing or concluding or dividing on any other question whatever."

The representation of four, which Labour had obtained in the Parliament about to expire, while it could give voice to the aspirations of Labour, could do nothing to modify the proposals of the Government where these ran counter to Labour ideals, and the ruling party showed its contempt for Labour opinion both inside and outside Parliament by its actions on various occasions, especially in regard to coloured labour. There had been strong complaint on the part of persons connected with the sugar industry that the planters could not extend their operations or even maintain their position, owing to the lack of suitable labour, and a demand was made for the importation of a large number of South Sea Islanders to work on the sugar plantations. The introduction of further numbers of coloured labourers was warmly opposed by European labourers, and in this they had the support of Griffith both in power and in opposition. In 1885 Griffith had passed an Act prohibiting the recruiting of islanders, and it was with surprise and much resentment that in March 1892 the white labourers of Queensland learnt that, speaking at Maryborough, a centre of the sugar-cane growing industry, he reversed the policy with which he had been associated, and advised the reintroduction of Polynesian labourers. Following this pronouncement, and within a month's time, the Pacific Labourers' Extension Bill was introduced and became law,

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in spite of vehement protests from the representatives of Labour, and indeed in cynical disdain of their opinions.

There had been no indication so far that Labour was sufficiently coherent to make the formation of a great political party possible ; there had been energetic preparation, but the movement had progressed along the channels prepared for it by the political activities of the colony, and by the personality and propaganda of William Lane. The elections of 1893 were to show the political value of the preparations of the previous seven years. A Triennial Parliaments Act had been passed in September 1890, but the existing Parliament was allowed to run almost its full course, so that it was not until 20th May 1893 that the general election was held. The platform actually presented to the electorate by the Queensland Labour Party at this election was a voluminous document which ran as follows :

Electoral Reform.—One man, one vote ; special provision to be made for all whose occupations necessitate a constant change of residence ; six months' residence in the colony to be the qualification for franchise ; all parliamentary elections on the same day and that day to be a public holiday, and all public-houses to be closed ; abolition of the Nominee Chamber.

National Work.—State control of water conservation and irrigation ; State-aided village settlements.

Education (Secular).—Elementary, compulsory ; higher, optional ; both absolutely free in State schools.

Regulation of Industry.—Statutory eight-hours day where practicable ; Shops and Factories Act, with elected inspectors ; Mines Act, giving complete protection to miners ; Machinery Act, providing for inspection of land boilers and machinery, persons in charge to have certificates of competency.

Labour Rights.—State Department of Labour to which men can apply for work at a minimum wage as a right ; Wages Act, giving complete lien for wages over work performed, and full security for wages against all forfeiture whether by agreement or Court order ; a progressive tax upon land values, irrespective of improvements ; realization of adequate returns from the unalienated public estate.

Repeals.—Abolition of State-aided immigration ; abolition of all conspiracy laws relating to industrial disputes.

Law Reform.—All magistrates to be elected.

Referendum.—The submission of measures for the approval or rejection of the people.

Miscellaneous.—Revision of the railway tariff; the legal cancelling of a member's right to represent a constituency on a two-thirds majority adverse vote of his constituents; exclusion of coloured Asiatics and contract or indented labour; State construction and ownership of the railways; and any measure that will secure a fair and equitable return to labour and promote the progress and prosperity of the colony.

As regards local questions, including that of separation in Central and North Queensland, local organizations are free to determine their own course of action.

On no account shall the fiscal question be regarded as a Labour Party question.

Recommended.—To secure sober men as Labour candidates for Parliament.

The legislative programme thus outlined was the work of many hands and shows a wide departure from the strictly Socialistic platform adopted by the Australian Labour Federation in 1890, under the direct influence of Lane; at the same time it was an unreserved appeal to the wage-earning class as distinct from all other classes in the community. To the platform was added the following pledge, to be signed by candidates for selection by the branch organizations:

“I, the undersigned candidate for selection by the . . . Branch of the . . . Workers' Political Organization, hereby give my pledge that if not selected as a candidate for Parliament by the Branch, I will not in any way oppose the candidature of the duly selected nominee of this or any other branch, and if selected, I agree to advocate and support the principles contained in this platform.”

This form of pledge was adopted with the full knowledge of the trend of events in New South Wales, where the “solidarity pledge” was finding strong advocates, and it is clear that the Queensland Labour Party desired to let their parliamentary representatives have freedom of thought and action on all matters, not specifically set down in or implied by its written programme.

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The Workers' Political Organization fought the elections with great spirit, but the colony was at the time distracted by the numerous failures of financial institutions that had already occurred, and by the prospect of other failures to follow, and the elections evoked little enthusiasm amongst any part of the population, least of all amongst the working classes; nevertheless, the Labour Party won sixteen seats out of seventy-two, and two more were added as the result of by-elections within fourteen months. The party had therefore one-fourth of the total membership of the Assembly, which was proportionately as large a representation as that obtained by Labour in the Parliament of New South Wales, at the elections of 1891. The evolution of the party had now reached a very interesting stage, and its further development will be dealt with under the next industrial period.

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The interest of the parliamentary Labour movement in South Australia is in its atmosphere rather than in its idea or achievement, and the peculiar note of its conduct is, without question, compromise. In the case of New South Wales it was seen that the most conspicuous feature of the somewhat soulless tale of its parliamentary Labour organization was its legislative success, the signal achievement of the early-adopted policy of support in return for concession, its setting up of an *étalage* for the benefit of the other political parties, where its goods were well displayed. In Queensland we found an almost barren record of legislation, set off in the earlier years by a quite romantic and unique idealism, to which was added subsequently a certain quality of nervous vigour and tension, which contrasted picturesquely with the calculated bargaining in New South Wales and the dull commonplaceness in Victoria. The movement in South Australia resembled that of New South Wales in its record of ameliorative measures obtained, but its political and legislative success

was associated with a widespread intellectual curiosity, and an altruistic enthusiasm that somewhat recalls the atmosphere temporarily created in Queensland by the prophet Lane.

Experimental legislation does not present in South Australia the same interest as the student finds in New Zealand or in New South Wales. Where South Australia was a pioneer, as in its conciliation laws, it was not successful, while in other branches of economic regulation the Province exhibits a curious backwardness. Parliamentary manoeuvre, so well developed in New South Wales, is almost without interest in South Australia, where there were no very definite party lines when Labour made its *début*. There is noticeable, on the other hand, a certain political idealism, but this was not the monopoly of the Labour Party or even one of its chief characteristics. The chief exponents of this trait were the debating societies and political clubs, numerous in the Province, and largely supported by the German element, who temperamentally were strongly imbued with doctrinaire tendencies. But if the party lacked idealism, it undisguisedly favoured the principle of collectivism, and supported all proposals for extending its sphere in the State's activity; yet it is characteristic of it that its various platforms were free from the doctrinaire elements so much a feature of the early pronouncements of the Queensland party, and, as time wore on, of the New South Wales party also. Labour in New South Wales was an influencing and at times a propelling force; in Queensland it was an opposing force, while in South Australia, as we shall see, it was as a force co-operating with other Liberal elements that the party found, during these years, its adequate expression. This peculiarity of the movement in South Australia was determined for it by the traditions of the Province itself and by its political atmosphere, and it is in realizing that atmosphere rather than in chronicling the sequence of events that the position will be best understood.

The Wakefield theory of colonization was the very

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reverse of democratic, and the South Australian Act embodied a great deal of that theory. But while it is true that the scheme of 1834 contemplated a complete division between owners and employed, it did not admit the principle of servile labour then prevailing over the rest of Eastern Australia. There was in South Australia no convict era ; its labourers may not have been propertied, but in the legal sense they were free. A second noteworthy fact is that the original scheme of settlement, in so far as it handed over the whole domain of the Province to the association for economic development, while prohibiting the indiscriminate sale of lands, was as hostile to the anarchy of squatting as it was opposed to an ideally wide distribution of property among all members of the community. With the Wakefield era there thus came to the Province, on the one hand, the principle of legal security for all inhabitants, and, on the other, the principle of economic regulation for all districts. Nor did the Wakefield tradition disappear with the Wakefield system and the provisions of the Act of 1834. When Grey took over the administration, the circumstances of the colony demanded the extension rather than the disappearance of the old paternalism. The loins of the commissioners were but as the little finger of Governor Grey, so necessary was it that the enterprise should be raised by procuratorial care and authority from the extremity into which it had fallen.

The democratic traditions dating back to the original settlement of the Province were accepted and strengthened by the settlers of the second migration. The conservative squatting element was still repressed, and any considerable influx of population from its eastern neighbours was discouraged, the colonists preferring to recruit immigrants in England or Germany rather than in New South Wales or Victoria. The traditions of regulation inherited from the founders of the settlement and maintained by the earlier Governors were respected, and if the democratic element grew somewhat at the expense of the regulative, that must be attributed to the influence of the gold rush. It is

characteristic that the large majority of the South Australian settlers who went to the goldfields returned to their own Province, bringing back with them not only new wealth, but a new spirit of independence. This phenomenon, however, which no Australian historian may safely neglect, was not peculiar to South Australia, although, owing to its political and geographical circumstances, the Province and its people were influenced by this factor in a rather particular degree.

Besides this historical contribution to the general make-up of the South Australian political atmosphere, there is another equally important, namely, the *geographical* or rather the *physical*. Nothing is more striking in the record of the Labour movement in Queensland than the degree to which it was hampered, and often subdued, by the pastoral influences that controlled the Legislature of that colony. Queensland is essentially a large-owners' country. Enterprise on a small scale is not efficient in the production of such commodities as especially flourish there—sugar, beef, and gold—and it cannot be questioned that the lack of a farming community, an intermediate class between the squatters and millowners and the miners and shearers, greatly hampered its orderly development. The case of South Australia is very different; the Province is, *par excellence*, an agricultural country, the mining and manufacturing industries not forming very considerable items in the whole productive output. It is significant also that the trade union element is highly concentrated, the manufactures of the Province being found in the narrow area of Adelaide and its port, while the miners are grouped at Moonta and Wallaroo, and not scattered over the country as in Queensland. Further, the close proximity to South Australia of the strongly anti-capitalist vote at Broken Hill was undoubtedly a direct stimulus to the growth of democratic unrest. These three circumstances—the absence of a pastoral influence, which is nearly always on the side of Conservatism; the presence of a large-farmers' influence, nearly always Liberal; and the

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concentration of the workers' influence in one large centre, making trade organization very simple — greatly added to the democratic bias mentioned as being traditional in the Province.

There is, however, another factor, that of religion, which must not be overlooked. In New South Wales 70 per cent of the population, and in Queensland 60 per cent belong to the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches; in South Australia these denominations embrace hardly more than 42 per cent, the great body of the people being members of various Protestant non-Episcopal Churches. These figures afford ample explanation of the ecclesiastical squabbles under Governor Robe, and prepare us to expect a certain democratic bias in the community. Without going into the problem of devotional psychology in history, it may be fairly proposed that nonconformity and democracy are symptoms of a similar attitude of mind, and have as a general rule gone hand in hand.

Agreeable with the traditions of the Province and the composition and surroundings of its people, there were already in operation during the 'eighties of the last century Liberal laws and institutions to which the other colonies had not then attained. The Upper House or Legislative Council was elective, with a reasonably low property qualification, both for members and electors; members of both Houses of the Legislature were paid, and there was an entire absence of the abuse of plural voting, so noticeable in the other colonies. There were working-men magistrates, and under the Lands Act of 1888 leases of small blocks of land, up to an area of 20 acres, might be granted to working-men "gaining their livelihood by their own labour." There was a Workmen's Compensation Act, not, it is true, very comprehensive in its character, but significant of the trend of opinion in the Province, and, not unduly to extend the list, a tax on the unimproved value of land.

The state of parties in the Legislature at this time affords plain evidence of the Liberal character of political

opinion in South Australia. In dealing with the progress of the Labour movement in Queensland it was pointed out that there was little of what is understood as "party government," for the reason that the Liberal-Labour opposition was so weak that the "continuous government" remained impregnable in the face of every possible opposition combination. In South Australia, too, party government, in the ordinary sense, could scarcely be said to exist, but for very different reasons. There would be little exaggeration in saying that every member declared his own policy and every ministry called itself democratic. There was, in fact, a general agreement about most of the ordinary matters of government and administration. But while there was thus a consensus of opinion in favour of Liberal measures, each of the leading politicians had usually a special piece of legislation, as often as not belonging to the genus of fads, and for this he would endeavour to secure the attention of the public, and if successful, the attention of Parliament also. It generally happened that, the Opposition leader having defeated the Ministry, it might be on its principal member's pet fad, or Parliament having come to the conclusion that a change of Ministry should be tried, a new Ministry came in. This Ministry was allowed to govern in the ordinary way, passing the sort of measures which the general public approved of, until either its Premier, in his turn, chose to introduce his own legislative eccentricity without properly feeling his ground in the House or the country, or the country grew tired of the Ministry and its petty ways, and then another change was tried. This was group government, and every pettifogging politician had his chance of a little, if brief, authority. South Australia was an ideal country for this sort of quick-change government, but naturally vital legislation and grand finance were not to be expected.

The country, over a wider area, reflected the same condition of opinion as prevailed in the Assembly. There was the same common denominator of Liberal prejudice and the same variety of prejudices on particular points.

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But what was most remarkable about South Australian opinion was its amazing vigour and activity. It has been pointed out in connexion with Queensland that the *début* of the Labour Party was accompanied by an outburst of discussion upon sociological and political questions. But in that colony the question of black labour and the question of separation tended somewhat to obscure the importance of other issues, and in any case sociological discussion in Queensland in 1890 and thereabouts was not the result of sheer interest in academic and public questions so much as of the panic caused by Lane's crusade. In answer to his collectivism, and, so to speak, in self-defence, the good citizens talked about co-operation. But we find in Adelaide, which loved to suppose itself the "Modern Athens," an amazing energy of debate, of argument, of oratory and correspondence, occupying itself not only with idealistic problems of the social fate of the species, but with stern questions of administration, legislation, and finance. A hundred societies sprang up and argued these problems at weekly meetings, at conferences, at socials. We hear of a "Society for the Study of Christian Sociology," an "East Adelaide Mutual Improvement Debating Society and Model Parliament," a "Glenelg Political Association," a "Literary Societies' Union of South Australia and Union Parliament," a "South Australian Fabian Society," a "North Adelaide Patriotic Association," a "Single Tax League," and a "Democratic Club." The most important among these clubs for political discussion were the last two. The Single Tax League emanated from Henry George's visit to Australia in the early 'nineties; in South Australia, as in other colonies, he was greeted almost as a prophet, and drew adherents from every class of the community. The Democratic Club was conducted for the most part, though not entirely, by persons associated with the Trades and Labour Council, and its weekly addresses and debates were the principal factors in the political education of the Adelaide Progressives. The importance of this insti-

tution, over and above its character as the principal of the discussion societies, which kept alight the fire of political controversy at a period not over-productive of great questions, consisted in the fact that it formed a link between the middle-class democracy of the Single Tax League and the trade unionist democracy of the Trades and Labour Council with its affiliated societies.

The most interesting characteristic of the Labour movement in South Australia was its position as an element in a wider movement of which it was not always a pioneer nor even the extreme wing. Before ever there was a Labour Party there was a strong democratic element, against which the more Conservative part of the community found it expedient to organize. Broadly speaking, it may be said of the other colonies, that those who were not for the Labour movement were against it. In South Australia Labour received support from all classes. When, in July 1889, a deputation approached Premier Cockburn to ask that the Government should make a grant for a Trades Hall site, the Speaker of the Assembly and the Attorney-General of the recently-fallen Playford Ministry were included in the deputation, and Cockburn, in giving a favourable answer, said that if he were not receiving the deputation he, too, would have been a member of it. This might be taken as the euphemism of a plausible politician, but there is independent evidence that the Labour movement was favoured by many voters who were not unionists. At the elections of May 1891, the united Labour Party put forward three candidates for the Legislative Council; for the South district its candidate was successful; for the Central district Labour did not succeed, but its two candidates polled so well that it is clear they received very strong support from single-taxers and other non-unionist sympathizers. Later on, in 1892, when the first straight-out Labour man was returned to the Assembly by the East Adelaide constituency his poll was about 1200, while it is certain the trade unionist vote cast for him did not exceed 700.

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The existence of this extreme Liberal sentiment was naturally reflected in the programmes of the various politicians, who, at this particular period, played in and out in the South Australian Legislature. It will be unnecessary for the purpose of illustrating this point to go farther back than the two-years Ministry of Playford, which came to grief in June 1889 for no other reason than that it was two years old. Whatever fault Labour could find with this Ministry, it was not on account of its failure to pass legislation pleasing to the party. Playford's record of Liberal measures included the Chinese Immigration Act, the Consolidating Crown Lands Act, which included the provision for workmen's blocks, and the payment of members. His Government had also appointed a Royal Commission to inquire as to the practicability of extending to seamen the principle of compensation established in the case of other labourers. The Government was out of office before anything could be done to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission, but Kingston, who had been Attorney-General under Playford, continued the project when in Opposition, and carried through Parliament an Employers' Liability Amendment Act, which accorded to seamen rights of compensation similar to those given to other workmen by the original Act.

The presence of Charles Cameron Kingston in any Ministry was certainly a guarantee for the Liberalism of its tendencies. This remarkable man figures so largely in the history of the Province and of Australia generally that a few words about him will not here be out of place. The son of Sir George Kingston, a pioneer and a Speaker of the Assembly, he was born in Adelaide in 1850. From 1884 to 1885 he was Attorney-General with Colton, and held this same portfolio in the first Playford Ministry. He was a man of considerable ability, pleasing address, and somewhat violent prejudices. Of these last, the most considerable was that in favour of social experiment and amelioration. He was regarded as the parliamentary agent of the eight-hours movement, and had carried a

motion for the adoption of the eight-hours system in all branches of the Government service, and the insertion of an eight-hours provision in all Government contracts. He was intimately connected with the long agitation for a Trades Hall site grant, which began in 1889, and he proposed and ultimately carried through a scheme of conciliation and arbitration, which was the precursor of all Australasian legislation of that character.

This slight sketch of Kingston illustrates the point which it is desired should be established, that is, the very Liberal character of successive administrations. The Playford-Kingston Ministry fell in June 1889, and to it succeeded Cockburn, in witness of whose Liberalism, though he had been associated in Opposition with Downer, need only be adduced his attitude on the Trades Hall site question, and his advocacy of the progressive land tax. The Cockburn Ministry retained office for fourteen months, and was displaced by Playford on a question of administration connected with the Barrier traffic. The Playford Government was opposed to the progressive land tax, and in spite of its claim to support on account of the extreme Radicalism of its general policy, it was not favoured by the Labour Party. The Ministry was also strongly criticized by the Employers' Association, and by persons favourable to that body, on account of its conduct of public affairs during the great maritime strike. It had shown an admirable reluctance to anticipate disorder, or to provoke it by any display of the police force in the disturbed centres. In October 1890 the Government roused the ire of all sections of Conservative opinion by its resolute refusal, in spite of urgent representations on the part of the employers, to swear in special constables for the protection of free labourers. Kingston had not joined the Playford Government on its formation; he was preoccupied with his Conciliation Bill, and it was not until February 1892 that he accepted office.

It is very difficult to distinguish any broad difference of policy between one Ministry and another. Playford

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was against a progressive land tax, and was meditating a land-grant railway, the one favoured and the other opposed by the Labour element. But a person might be an advanced Liberal in Australia and hold with Playford on these points. A progressive land tax was a means to an end, and this end Playford hoped to attain by another road; and as for the land-grant railway, this was not a policy of choice but almost of desperation. If the people of the Province must have a railway from Port Augusta to Eucla there was certainly no money procurable for the purpose, and the alternative to a land-grant railway was no railway at all.

With regard to a grant of land of another character there was still greater friction; in this case the grant was to be made to the Trades and Labour Council. This body had long desired to obtain a suitable piece of land on which to build a hall which would serve as the headquarters of the trade unionists of the Province. The sum required was not so large that it could not have been raised by a levy on union members, but the Council preferred to ask the Government of the Province for a grant of land or a sum of money to purchase the land it required. Some of the Liberal members of the Assembly made little difficulty in supporting the demand of the Council, while others, equally Liberal, were unable to see that a section of the community was entitled to a grant from the public funds for the furtherance of sectional objects. The suggested grant, though often proposed, had therefore not yet been made by Parliament. Kingston had been a member of the deputation which had waited on Cockburn in 1889 to ask for a grant for a Trades Hall site, but in his Conciliation Bill of the following year he had proposed to endow a Conciliation Hall. In September 1891 Brooker, an "endorsed" Labour member, again brought up the question of the grant, and when Downer amended Brooker's proposal so that it would read "the grant of a site and building to be vested in trustees for the purpose of erecting a Conciliation Hall for the common use of workmen and their

employers," Kingston said that "while he was thoroughly in favour of a Trades Hall, he thought a Conciliation Hall was of even more importance," and so he voted for the amendment. The Trades and Labour Council did not want to share a public institution with the Employers' Association, and was much offended with Kingston when he joined the second Playford Administration.

This disagreement with the Trades and Labour Council did not cause the Ministry to relax its efforts in the direction of ameliorative legislation, but it disposed the Council to be rather critical of such measures. When the Factories and Workshops Bill was introduced, it failed to satisfy the Trades and Labour Council; there was no sweating in the factories of the Province, nor could reasonable exception be taken to the sanitation provisions of the Bill, but on both these points the Council claimed that the Government was lacking in proper regard for the welfare of factory workers. Just at this time the Labour Party was very much taken with the idea that the welfare of the Province was bound up with the question of a progressive land tax and the better utilization of large landed estates, which was being kept to the front by Cockburn. An amendment to the Address-in-Reply failed, and the opponents of the Government, including the Labour Party, looked around for a more serviceable cry than the progressive land tax had proved to be. This was soon found. Playford had agreed to take part in an intercolonial conference in regard to black labour, thus tacitly admitting, so his opponents said, that the question of coloured labour was still an open one. They called to mind also Playford's visit to India during the parliamentary recess, and his declared opinions as to the proper method of settling the Northern Territory. In June 1892, when Holder moved a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry, Macpherson, the first United Labour Party's representative in the Assembly, dwelt upon this matter of the Northern Territory with great vehemence. Kingston rallied the Labour section with their "black ingratitude," but in vain, and the Playford

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Ministry was replaced by one led by Holder. That the fall of Playford by no means meant the end of Liberalism was clearly shown when the new Ministerial programme was issued. It was found to include a proposal that the question of constitutional reform should be submitted to a referendum; the reintroduction of the Land Values Assessment Bill; a Conciliation Bill; a Workmen's Lien Bill; a Mining Bill based upon the recommendations of the Mining Commission; and a Factories and Workshops Bill on the lines laid down by the Commission appointed by the late Administration on the failure of its own measure. This Commission had reported in favour of three Bills: one for furthering the early closing movement, another providing for boiler inspection, and a third for the regulation of factories. The Holder Ministry of 1892 was much too weak to carry any very radical measure into law, however brave a show its programme may have made on paper. But the history of the Government on its administrative side gives a rather striking illustration of the degree to which it was influenced by trade union sentiment. When the Broken Hill strike was at its height, the Inspector-General of Police in Sydney telegraphed to his South Australian colleague as follows: "One hundred and twenty armed police will be despatched this afternoon by special train to Broken Hill. Kindly facilitate arrangements; also advise and assist Superintendent Grainger in procuring horses if he communicates with you on the subject." The South Australian Commissioner laid the telegram before Cockburn, who happened to be Chief Secretary, and asked for instructions. Eventually the following amazing reply was despatched: "Have received peremptory instructions to observe the strictest neutrality, which precludes my rendering you any assistance in connexion with your telegram to-day."

The stoppage of work at Broken Hill caused a considerable reduction in the customs and railway revenue of South Australia. Holder proved too weak to carry the necessary finance measures to meet the deficiency, and his

Ministry went out on Downer's motion of no confidence in October. With Downer, the least progressive of the latter-day South Australian Ministries entered upon office, but, apart from the final passage of the Conciliation Bill in a radically altered form through the Assembly, it had no opportunity of giving evidence of its attitude towards important legislation before the session terminated with the close of the year. In the following April (1893) Parliament itself came to an end; the ensuing elections left Downer in a minority, and Kingston entered on his long career as Premier.

To assert that the prevailing opinion of the colony at this time was distinctly Liberal is not to deny that there were elements of a Conservative tendency which, if not very influential, were sufficiently powerful to make themselves heard. In Parliament one looks instinctively to the Upper House for Conservative prejudice, and if in South Australia the comparatively Liberal franchise for the Council prevented the election of a majority of members whose customary outlook on public affairs was as reactionary as that of the members of the Second Chamber of Queensland, or even of that of New South Wales, it will yet be found that the list of measures rejected or shelved by the Council is a formidable one. In 1889 it rejected Cockburn's Bills for putting the payment of members on a permanent basis and for granting a Trades Hall site, and eliminated the vital section (Part XIX.) of his Municipal Corporations Bill, after all three had been successfully carried through the Assembly. In 1890 the most considerable victim of the Council was the Free Education Bill; in 1891 it killed the Electoral Laws Amendment Bill, the Land Values Assessment Bill, and the Conciliation Bill; in 1892 it again rejected a Land Values Assessment Bill, and shelved the Electoral Laws Amendment Bill a second time, and a Workmen's Lien Bill. The Conservative element in the Council was linked up with the Conservative element in the country by the personality of Richard Chaffey Baker, who was one of the most striking characters

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of the time. This distinguished if somewhat exotic gentleman was the son of the Hon. John Baker who died in 1871 after a lengthy career as a member of the Council. R. C. Baker, the son, having been born at North Adelaide in 1842, was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was a noted oarsman both on the Cam and on the Thames, and having been called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1864, he returned to his native land to practise. He was the first native-born colonist to become a member of the Legislature; the first to become a Minister of the Crown (Attorney-General in the Hart Ministry, 1870, Minister of Education in the Colton Ministry, 1884). His English connexions, however, renewed on the occasion of his postal mission in 1885, somewhat disguised his character as one of the native-born. Early in 1891 he founded the National Defence League, in correspondence with the National Associations of Victoria and New South Wales and the Patriotic League of Queensland, whose principal object was to combat "experimental legislation," to prevent South Australia becoming the "hospital of the world," "to prevent all undue class influences in Parliament, and to promote in all ways agreement, security, and general confidence, so that the public credit may be maintained, the producing interests protected, the investment of capital encouraged, and a continuance of employment provided, thus ensuring that all interests may share in a common prosperity." The League, stated the president and founder, "asked for no alteration in the electoral laws, *or for that matter in the laws at all*. They were merely asking that the laws should be kept inviolate and intact, unless it could be shown that any change was an improvement."

In Kingston and Baker we have presented the most antipathetic types of Australian-born colonists. If the past has on the whole been with Baker and his standpoint, the future is just as certainly with Kingston and his. That the importance of these two men, as exemplifying the main elements in the political thought of the Province,

has not been overestimated will appear from a narrative of the events which took place at the close of the period now under examination, and which rather aptly rang down the curtain upon the interlude between the first appearance of Labour in the Legislature and its *grande entrée* in 1893.

The two questions that during these earlier years most consistently asserted themselves among the Parliamentarians supporting the Labour movement were the Trades Hall site grant and the problem of conciliation and arbitration, and over these questions Kingston and Baker were at open war. The first collision occurred in December 1892. The first reading of the Labour Disputes' Settlement Bill had been moved in the Assembly by Kingston on 12th December 1890; the Bill was subsequently the sport of three sessions, and during the last of these was taken in charge more or less absolutely by three Ministries. The measure will be described elsewhere in the detail which its importance demands; here it will suffice to say that it had been greatly modified in its passage through the Assembly, and reached the Legislative Council on 29th November 1892. But while Kingston's Bill was before the Assembly, Baker carried in the Council the first reading of a Bill to "facilitate conciliation and encourage co-operation in industrial affairs," and designed in reality to get rid of the menace of compulsory arbitration by establishing machinery for promoting voluntary conference and conciliation. When Kingston's Compulsory Bill reached the Council, the order of the day for the second reading of Baker's Bill was still upon the notice paper. The Council was therefore confronted with a difficulty not easy of solution; Baker's Bill comprised a wider scope than Kingston's, and although there was a fundamental difference of spirit behind the rival measures, both had been introduced to deal with the same important problem. By his ruling, the president, Sir Henry Ayers, left the matter entirely to the judgment of the Council; but he pointed out that the Bills might be considered

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together, and if it was thought desirable Kingston's Bill might be adapted to secure the objects aimed at by Baker, and the measure thus recast returned to the Assembly in the ordinary course for the consideration of that body. In the event, the second reading of the Government Bill was carried by one vote on 13th December 1892, Baker's Bill was read a second time next day by a majority of five, and the two Bills were referred to a select committee for consolidation. A day or two later the Government took the matter up and appointed a Royal Commission to consider the rival measures "and frame a Bill to be submitted to Parliament early next session."

Kingston was of a disposition to take a serious difference of opinion from his view as a personal affront, and he had already reason for complaint against Baker on another score. When in 1889 the Trades Hall Site Grant Bill had passed the Assembly and was under the consideration of the Council, Baker promised his colleagues in the Council that if they would reject the Bill he would raise £1000 by private subscription and place the money at the disposal of the Trades and Labour Council. The Bill was accordingly thrown out, and the bulk of the promised money was raised and accepted by the Trades and Labour Council. It seems to have been understood by some of the subscribers, and by Baker himself, that the gift was conditional upon the Council undertaking to discontinue the agitation for a parliamentary grant, but in November 1892, when Brooker's motion was being discussed in the Assembly, Macpherson, the United Labour Party's member for East Adelaide, expressly claimed that the gift was unhampered by any conditions. Sir E. T. Smith, who had subscribed liberally to the fund, contended that his contribution had been given on the understanding that the agitation for a further grant should cease, and appealed to Baker for confirmation of his statement. Thereupon arose an acrid and heated discussion which enlivened the last weeks of the session. Correspondence was produced by Baker to show that the gift had been conditional;

correspondence was produced by the Trades and Labour Council to show that the gift had been received conditionally, on its being itself unconditional. A violent attack was made by Baker on Macpherson, and Kingston in support of the latter replied with equal violence and greater force. Baker, in the Council, complained that he had been attacked "by a gentleman who was known to be as big a coward as he was a big bully, who was a member of and a disgrace to the legal profession," and so on. Furthermore, "Could the Minister of Education wonder at his being indignant and angry when he found that a man who had been branded by a Select Committee of the Council as being unworthy of credence, when giving evidence on what was equivalent to being on oath . . . doubted his veracity . . . ?"

Baker's allegation had reference to the recently issued report of a select committee, of which he had been a member, appointed to inquire why certain alterations of rates in connexion with the South-Eastern Railway traffic had not been gazetted. Kingston had denied responsibility for the omission, but the committee declared that "the probabilities of the case and the documentary evidence bear out the statement that the Hon. C. C. Kingston either instructed or requested the Railway Commissioners not to issue the statutory *Gazette* notice." Kingston spoke for two hours in the Assembly in his own defence, and said that he had proved his opponent to be "false as a friend, treacherous as a colleague, mendacious as a man, and utterly untrustworthy in every relationship of public life."

Kingston's speech was followed up by a letter requiring Baker to meet him at half-past one, on a day named, opposite his (Baker's office) in Victoria Square, Adelaide. With this pleasing communication Kingston enclosed a loaded revolver and some cartridges, and intimated that he would appear at the appointed hour with a similar weapon and await Baker's appearance. Old citizens must have recalled the historic challenge sent by Sir R.

R. Torrens to G. M. Waterhouse, to which the latter had replied, "You dare no more shoot me than I dare shoot you, what's the use of making fools of ourselves?" Upon this occasion Baker communicated with the police, and sent word to Kingston that he would attend. Kingston arrived in Victoria Square, revolver and all, at the appointed hour and was promptly arrested by a couple of detectives, and when Baker arrived a few minutes later he found his opponent safely disarmed. On 29th December 1892 Kingston appeared before the court charged with having "unlawfully, wickedly, wilfully, and maliciously composed, written, sent, and caused to be delivered to Richard Chaffey Baker a certain letter and paper writing, containing a challenge to fight a duel with the said Charles Cameron Kingston, with intent to instigate, excite, and provoke the said Richard Chaffey Baker to fight a duel with him and against him, the said Charles Cameron Kingston, against the peace of Our Lady the Queen, her Crown and dignity," and was bound over in £500 to keep the peace.

At a cursory glance the details of this celebrated fiasco may seem more interesting in themselves than relevant to the matter particularly in hand, and humorous rather than important. But, as we have said, the interest of the subject is one of atmosphere. The peculiarity of the South Australian Labour movement is its character as an incident in a general turmoil of political agitation of a Liberal character, its excellence consisting in its willingness to compromise. The picture of the political *milieu* of South Australia, which we have been endeavouring to present, would therefore have been incomplete had it not included an illustration of that unsatisfactory element in the general complex which compelled Labour, while it remained practical as ever, to take the field in behalf of its own particular cause. There were several reasons which had weight with the party, and impelled it to adopt the parliamentary method to attain its ends, but in the circumstances of the Kingston-Baker episode we have,

mply set forth, one of the most fundamental. The lesson learnt by the South Australian Labour Party during these years was the common one that a *general* interest, even enthusiasm, for a social policy is more likely to issue in exhaustive debate than in vital action. Further, that politicians like Kingston, however deeply they may be imbued with intellectual vivacity and broad-minded interest in what might be, as well as in what was and what is, are all liable to temper their interest and enthusiasm with a certain luxurious hesitancy and dilettante trifling, unless they are influenced by the pressing ardour of a deeply engrossing movement, and, what is perhaps more important still, to allow their progress to be delayed by the ephemeral, if exciting, personalities and intrigues of parliamentary life. They may have more tactical skill, they may have a vastly greater variety of ideas, but, partly by reason of this intellectual wealth of theirs, they do not hurl themselves with the simple and irresistible vigour of the class-conscious Labour politician at the barriers which obstruct social betterment. The crowning extravagance of Kingston, and equally the death of G. W. Cotton, the most typical of the endorsed Labour members and the "blocker's friend," which occurred in the same few weeks, brought home to the Labour Party the weakness and limitations of the old system of Labour action, and demonstrated the need for that new method upon which, early in the following year, it triumphantly embarked.

In this brief sketch of the political conditions of South Australia and the atmosphere in which politicians worked, the beginnings of the Labour movement have only been incidentally touched upon. There had been trade organizations at an early stage in the history of the Province, but it was not until 1884 that the United Trades and Labour Council was formed. Its ostensible purpose was to link up existing trade societies. It had been preceded by the United Tradesmen's Society, which presently changed itself into the Labour League of South Australia, and carried

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on its work with a modicum of success from 1874 to 1882. The United Trades and Labour Council was not primarily a political organization, but at an early stage of its career it interested itself so far in politics as to suggest the candidates for whom it considered trade unionists and union sympathizers ought to vote. At the election of 1887 the Council approved of nine candidates, of whom seven were successful.

Candidates were as a rule pleased to obtain the endorsement of the Trades and Labour Council, but it would be misleading to say that the endorsement was usually a passport to victory, as might be supposed from the bare statement just made. It grew to be a habit amongst organizations in Australia to advise their friends and supporters at election time how they should vote, and the newspapers published statements to the effect that the candidates named had the endorsement of the Good Templars, Licensed Victuallers, the Protestant societies, the Australian Natives, or other associations, one candidate frequently carrying three or more sectional nominations. The endorsement of a candidate by the Trades and Labour Council was usually an advantage to him, and was therefore, in certain districts, much coveted, which was not the case with the endorsement of some of the other organizations mentioned. In the previous part of this chapter there have been references to Labour members and the Labour connexion; in all these it will be understood that the legislators referred to were of this "endorsed" description. A Labour candidate, himself a miner, was returned by the mining constituency of Wallaroo to the Assembly in 1891; but he was not a "straight-out" Labour candidate in the sense that he was selected by the united Labour Party, or had subscribed to its platform. So far as the Assembly was concerned the first straight-out Labour member did not make his appearance until 1892.

The causes which contributed to the discredit of the endorsement system were various. The success of the New South Wales Labour Party naturally had much weight

with the party in South Australia; but even before this there had grown up the idea, which we have already elaborated, that, while Labour could co-operate on all occasions to further the objects of the Liberal parties, those parties could not be trusted to promote the specific aims of Labour. Liberalism comprehended so much that had no special interest for Labour, that the things Labour most desired were likely to be overlooked. It was only the class-conscious Labour man who would understand what these things meant to Labour. In South Australia the party had no desire for a social revolution, but merely to secure advantages for Labour; it was only on occasion that Labour was socialistic or altruistic. There were particular and local reasons which made for a change. The choice of endorsed candidates by the Trades and Labour Council in 1890 gave rise to much discussion. Twenty were endorsed, and of these fourteen were returned to Parliament, but the policy adopted of supporting for the most part the Ministerialist land tax party led by Lockburn, and offering corresponding opposition to the Mayford connexion, which included Kingston, did not meet with the approval of a large number of trade unionists, for whom the eight-hours day and the securing of a grant for a Trades Hall site, of both of which Kingston was then the recognized champion, were of greater immediate importance than a progressive tax on land values.

These were the predisposing causes. But the actual and immediate cause of the determination of Labour to seek redress of its grievances by direct parliamentary action was the epidemic of trade disputes which occurred in the early 'nineties, from which South Australia was by no means exempt. Labour sympathizers held fast to the opinion that in these disputes Labour was invariably in the right, and looked to Parliament to give reality to the principles of conciliation and arbitration which had for so long been a matter of barren discussion.

South Australia suffered less perhaps than the other eastern colonies during the maritime strike of 1890, but

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the after-effects were quite as disastrous as in New South Wales or Victoria, and the moral was underlined by the result of the strike at the Moonta Copper Mines, which ended in February 1892, after continuing for nineteen weeks. The men lost, as they were bound to lose, seeing that the state of the mines was such as to make an increased wage-rate impossible; but more than this, they went back to work at lower wages than were paid when they came out. Finally, the disastrous spectacle of the affairs at Broken Hill during the great strike, which came to an end the following November, effectually cured the South Australian unionists of any hope of wringing concessions from capitalism as the result of direct industrial action, which was the current euphemism for a strike or threat of a strike.

The considerations which impelled Labour to enter the political arena as an active participant have been fully discussed, and a description given of the main characteristics of the stage on which it was about to play its part; there remains to be seen how it made its *début*.

A General Election had been held in South Australia early in 1890, and, as we have seen, twenty candidates received the endorsement of the Trades and Labour Council, having subscribed to the following platform, which had been drawn up by the Council's parliamentary committee:

1. Protection for the purpose of encouraging local industries and the further development of the resources of the colony.
2. Lien Bill on the lines of the Queensland Bill.
3. Workshops and Factories Act on the lines of the New Zealand Act.
4. Payment of members.
5. Progressive tax on land values without exemption.
6. Tax on goods and passengers carried intercolonially in foreign vessels.
7. Inspection of land boilers.
8. Free education, with maintenance of the present standard.
9. Absent Seamen's Voting Bill.

10. Reform of the Council in the direction of manhood suffrage and shortening the term of election.
11. Working-men's blocks and loans to blockers.
12. Trades Hall site or a sum on estimates for that purpose.
13. Eight-hours Bill.
14. Removal of duties from tea, coffee, cocoa, and kerosene.
15. Reciprocity treaty with Queensland.
16. Against free and assisted immigration.
17. Amendment of the Railway Commissioners Act.
18. The establishment of the Department of Labour.
19. Redistribution of Seats Bill.

The most noticeable thing about this programme is that every plank is sound practical politics as understood in South Australia, protection occupying the place of honour. But this was not a platform declaratory of the principles and aspirations of Labour, but a series of planks which Labour could endorse and Liberal candidates accept without sacrifice of principle. The list is also indicative of the cautious character of the Unionist Executive; nothing was inserted which did not appear likely to be accepted by Parliament, the executive desiring to be able to claim that what it had put forward for the acceptance of the country, Parliament had found itself bound to accept also. It is interesting to compare this platform of the United Trades and Labour Council with that drawn up for express Labour candidates by the United Labour Party in 1892. This it will be seen is a very different class of document.

If the platform of the Trades and Labour Council be taken as justified by its results, the Council was indeed successful. During the course of the first session of the new Parliament eleven out of the nineteen planks received attention at the hands of the Legislature, the most important and radical of them had twice been mooted, once as a Government resolution, once by the Opposition; four of the planks, including one of prime importance, the Education Act, were passed by the Assembly, and two

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had become law. But there were reasons also for dissatisfaction. The Municipal Corporations Act had been passed, but it was shorn of the sections relating to the assessment of land values upon which the Labour Party laid much stress. The Education Bill, after a successful passage through the Assembly, had been lost in the Council. The Chinese Immigration Restriction Amendment Act, by which the number of Chinese who could be lawfully carried was increased from one person to every five hundred tons to one person to every fifty tons, had been unpleasantly well received. There had been no Lien Bill, although Conservative Queensland had one; there had been no Factories Bill, and the land-grant railway menace had appeared.

The elections for the Legislative Council were to be held early in 1891, and the fate of the Education and Assessment Bills in the Council was a challenge to action. In December the Trades and Labour Council invited all city and suburban societies and workers' clubs to send their executives to a meeting at the Selborne Hotel on 7th January 1891. This Congress established the United Labour Party. The new organization resolved to enter at once upon a campaign for direct Labour representation in Parliament. A platform was drawn up and a form of pledge adopted, and a little later the affiliated societies were asked to levy a contribution of sixpence per member to meet the expenses of candidates. It was decided that the central and southern districts should be contested; Charleston, ex-President of the United Trades and Labour Council, and Guthrie, President of the Maritime Labour Council, were chosen to stand for the first-named district, and Kirkpatrick, the President of the United Trades and Labour Council, should stand for the southern district. The following manifesto was issued :

1. Protection for the purpose of encouraging local industries and the further development of the resources of the colony.

2. A progressive land tax, or, failing this, an increase in the present tax, with exemption on small holdings.
3. A Liens Act for the better protection of workmen's wages.
4. A Workshops and Factories Act to secure adequate breathing space, to regulate and limit the hours of labour, limit the age at which young persons may be employed, and to provide proper sanitary arrangements in all buildings used as workrooms and factories.
5. Steam Boilers' Inspection Bill.
6. Free Education, with maintenance of the present age and standard.
7. Principle of taxing land values as embodied in Part XIX. of the Land Values Assessment Bill, as originally introduced.
8. Intercolonial tax.
9. Amendment of Railway Commissioners Act.
10. Department of Labour.
11. Redistribution of seats on the basis of population.
12. Adult suffrage.
13. Reform of Council.
14. State Bank.
15. Compensation to tenant farmers for improvements.
16. Working-men's blocks and loans to blockers.
17. Trades Hall site or grant.
18. An eight-hours day.
19. Removal of customs from tea, coffee, cocoa, kerosene.

The elections coincided with a visit of Sir George Grey to the scene of his previous labours, and the old warrior spoke amid intense enthusiasm at the United Trades and Labour Council on the subject of "One man, one vote." The result was a great triumph for Labour and its supporters. The central district, which contained all the most democratic constituencies and comprised about one-third of the total population of the Province, returned the two Labour candidates with a triumphant majority, the polling being the highest ever known in the division. A week later Baker, who was then busy founding his Defence League, discovered to his disgust that his successful colleague in the representation of the southern district

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was Kirkpatrick. A few weeks later the miners of Moonta returned their fellow-worker, Hooper, for Wallaroo.

When Parliament assembled in June 1891 the Ministerial programme was found to include, along with the distasteful land-grant railway scheme, Part XIX., the reform of the Council, and free education. Before the month was out Playford had introduced a Bill for the regulation of factories and workshops, and for making advances to "blockers." Flushed with success, the exultant Council determined to call for nominations for the Assembly elections, which were to take place in 1893. In the other colonies the choice of candidates was left to the local Leagues; in South Australia, if this course had been followed, the candidates would in all likelihood have been below the general standard of the party leaders, and might not have secured the willing support of the single-taxers and other sympathizers with Labour on general grounds. The plan was therefore adopted, first of all of determining what seats should be contested, and then asking branches to nominate persons to fill these seats. It was decided that fifteen candidates should be put forward, and the branches were asked to submit nominations for these seats; they responded by sending in sixty-two names. A ballot was then taken in which all members of the League and its branches were eligible to take part, and it was arranged that the fifteen coming first in the ballot should be the candidates submitted to the electorate. When the fifteen had been thus chosen it was found that the list did not include Thomas Price, afterwards Premier, one of the most popular members of the party. His name was therefore added to the list, and the party put forward sixteen candidates. Before the General Election, however, it had an opportunity of testing its strength, as Sir John Bray vacated his seat on his appointment as Agent-General. J. A. Macpherson was put forward as a candidate for the vacancy; he won the seat by 174 votes, and entered the Assembly as the first Labour member elected on the United Labour Party ticket.

The Labour Party was ready to enter the field, and on 16th February 1893 it issued its platform for the impending elections, which was as follows :

1. Stoppage of alienation of Crown land, and substitution of a leasing system.
2. Remission of duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, kerosene, and upon articles which cannot be grown or produced in the colony, any resulting deficiency in the revenue to be made up by an increase in the Land Tax.
3. Part XIX. (of the Municipal Assessment Bill), placing rates upon the land and exempting improvements.
4. Encouragement to local authorities and the further development of the resources of the colony.
5. Workshops and Factories Bill ; Boilers Inspection and Registration Bill ; Early Closing Bill, on lines recommended by Factories and Shops Commission ; Lien Bill ; Eight - Hours Bill ; Mining Act Amendment ; Amendment of Marine Board and Navigation Act.
6. Electoral Law Amendment : To give greater facilities for the transference of electors from one district to another ; to restrict expenses of candidates at elections ; to redistribute seats on a population basis ; to make permanent the Absent Voters Bill.
7. Reform of Council : Term of membership to be shortened ; rental qualification reduced from £25 to £10.
8. Department of Labour.
9. State Bank of Issue.
10. Encouragement and extension of working-men's blocks system.
11. Trades Hall site or grant.
12. Opposed to land-grant railways.
13. Repeal of Indian immigration acts.
14. Prohibition of influx of Asiatic and servile races, and restriction of indentured immigrants.
15. Referendum.
16. State Export Department of wheat, wool, wine, and other agricultural and horticultural produce, by giving assistance in the shape of advances and means of transit, so that producers may be able to obtain the full benefits of foreign markets.

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The moderation of the platform of 1890 was explained by the suggestion that it was intended for endorsed candidates who were not actual members of the party, but how is the equal moderation of this platform to be explained? The League had definitely decided that all its candidates should be Labour men without interest in or connexion with any other party; it felt under no necessity to insert in its platform planks which it was not greatly interested in and appeared certain to be accepted by Parliament, whereby it would be able to boast that its programme was being carried out by the Legislature. The platform of 1892 represented the real aspirations of the United Labour League, and illustrates that characteristic of compromise which earlier we ascribed to the movement in South Australia. The old precedence of Protection has disappeared, and the fiscal question is only hinted at; the first plank is new and far from communistic and by no means outside the scope of a Liberal programme. The most novel proposal is the sixteenth, which may be said to incline toward Socialism, but it goes a very short way in that direction, and, like the fourth, it has a general and patriotic sense, and contemplates the fortunes of the primary producer, not of the trade unionist. The platform displays those characteristics of the South Australian movement, its moderation and its general appeal, upon which we have been laying particular stress. The great plethora of discussion had issued not in doctrinaire Socialism, but in a wide and popular sanity.

The General Election was held on 15th April 1893, and the Labour Party succeeded in returning eight out of its sixteen candidates. An election for a vacancy in the Legislative Council was held at the same time, and resulted in the return of a Labour member; in the following year another seat fell to Labour, bringing up the number of its seats in the Council to five. The entry of Labour into the political life of South Australia caused no disturbance to the Government, which went on with its programme

undisturbed by the newcomers, as it well might do seeing there was little to distinguish such programme from one that would in like circumstances have been put forward by a purely Labour Government. .

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PART VII

FROM THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 1893 TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH
IN 1901

I

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVENTH PERIOD

THE seventh period brings the industrial history of Australia to the establishment of the Commonwealth on 1st January 1901. At first sight its most obvious characteristic is the contrast presented to the years of commercial expansion and speculation which had preceded it. The early years were a time of depression, which varied in intensity in the different colonies according to the extent of their plunge into the financial whirlpool of the preceding period. Victoria was the greatest sufferer, and Melbourne suffered more than other capitals, but all the colonies felt the blow which the crisis dealt to credit in Australia and to Australian credit in Europe. In its ultimate effects the crisis was by no means all evil. The business communities of all the colonies required the chastening rod of adversity to teach them a salutary lesson. Prior to 1893 the credit allowed to storekeepers and other tradespeople was on the whole much greater than sound experience warranted, and the credit given to speculators by banks and other financial institutions was a still more serious evil. One of the first results of the crisis was to abolish most of the abuses of the credit system and put business on a satisfactory basis. The redirection of attention towards productive industry, from which it had been diverted during the land boom, was noticeable about 1891 and greatly increased after the crisis. The country made a good recovery from its

financial ill-health, slow at first owing to the depression in prices, and hindered by drought, but steady and without relapse.

The effect of the crisis on public credit was very pronounced. From 1893 to 1896 most of the colonies were beset by monetary difficulties, and the chief object of their policy was to disembarass themselves and set their finances in order. The necessity of so doing was so great and so obvious, that it affected the policy of all parties whether in power or not.

Apart from the political and economic effects of the commercial crisis, the outstanding feature of the period was the progress towards unification. Although the Federation of the Australian colonies was achieved after only a short electoral struggle, it had been preceded by long political and economic preparation, by which the way was made clear for a real union based upon homogeneity of interests, of institutions, and of sentiment. This preparation in the case of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland went forward, almost without interruption, from the grant of responsible government. In the case of Tasmania and Western Australia it was hampered and delayed, as the preceding narrative shows, and as late as the 'eighties these two colonies presented a social structure quite different from that of the other Australian states.

Though Tasmania had been a self-governing colony for nearly forty years, and Western Australia had only attained that dignity in 1890, conditions were in many respects similar in both colonies. Neither of them was a democratic community, and in both the tradition handed down from the period of assigned labour was still strong enough to affect vitally the relations of capital and labour. But the discoveries of silver and copper in Tasmania and of gold in Western Australia, which were developed between 1890 and 1900, brought about a marvellous assimilation of conditions to those obtaining in other parts of Australia. Wages rose, the position of the manual labour classes was

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altered completely, and there was a large immigration of Australians from other parts, which transformed social conditions and prepared Tasmania and Western Australia to enter the comity of states on a footing of real equality and similarity.

The rise of the Labour Parties was another characteristic of the period which made for the unity of Australia. As will be seen, the Labour Parties developed in somewhat different ways in the different colonies, and were in unequal stages of development and of organization when the period closed. In spite of this and in spite of certain eccentricities of method, the growth of a Labour Party in every Australian state brought about a great unity in political aims, and gave to Federation a political reality which it would have been difficult to ensure before the Labour Party came into existence.

Few middle-class politicians in the colonies had shown any great breadth of view. All were inclined to limit their aims to the immediate needs of their own communities, and the difficulties which from time to time arose out of the divergent and conflicting interests of different colonies seemed to add a zest to local politics, without calling forth any statesmanlike conceptions leading to the readjustment or accommodation of these divergencies. The aims of Labour were, on the contrary, very much the same in all the colonies, and this unity of aims made Labour an Australian party, and not particularly the party of any special colony. It is true that, in Victoria especially, the doctrine of Protection was a stumbling-block and did something to divide the Victorian Labour Party from its fellows, but on the whole, the doctrines of the Labour Parties and the interests of Labour had a natural solidarity throughout Australia which was not to be found in the other political parties. On the subject of the employment of coloured labour, for example, there was considerable difference of opinion among middle-class politicians in the different colonies. The interest taken in the question ranged from furious partisanship to the

mildest theoretic views, but Labour throughout Australia had but one view on the subject. The federation of Labour throughout Australia, which took place during this period, had a very powerful political effect, and while it might be said that in its beginnings the Labour Party was but the party of a class, and that it had much to learn before it could be regarded as a truly national party, it must also be admitted that the class it represented was spread over the continent and had some experience in dealing with large questions affecting Australia as a whole.

In the field of politics where the agitation for union with its successful issue tended to efface all distinction between the various bourgeois parties, on Labour it had a contrary effect. In nearly all the colonies the Labour Party emerged from its former inchoate condition and became a formidable political power. The two subjects, Federation and the Labour movement, are dealt with at some length in special chapters as their importance deserves, and apart from them there was little of interest in the politics of the country.

In all the states, with the exception of Western Australia, the question of finance during the first half of the period, and of Federation during the later years, had a disturbing effect upon State politics. From 1893 to 1897 the chief prepossession of the Governments was to improve the financial condition of their states. There was an active policy in some of the colonies, as in New South Wales, where legislation of a purely financial kind coupled with the adoption of Free Trade proved very successful, in others as in Victoria the financial policy never rose above the merest drudging economy. In all the states finance was the keynote of Government policy; even agrarian legislation took a subordinate place and the Lands Acts of the period were mainly attempts to deal with unemployment caused by the financial disasters. The main effect of the financial difficulty was inhibitory. It preoccupied Governments to such an extent that other

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aspects of politics almost disappeared from view. The Labour Party was less affected than other parties by this question and exacted a certain amount of industrial legislation, but even upon that party the effect of the financial problem was considerable. It gave a certain sobriety to its demands, causing it to modify its programmes, or at least such part of them as it was actively pressing on the attention of Parliament. When the financial difficulties were passing away Federation rose into prominence; it also exerted an inhibitory influence upon State politics. In New South Wales Federation became mainly a question of fiscal policy and to that extent it was also a question of local politics, but in the other colonies, though Federation was not so keenly contested, it turned attention from State politics, and, during the last two years of the century, the most prominent politicians being concerned with the new and larger stage that was being prepared for them, interested themselves to a very slight extent in State questions, unless it was thought that such questions were likely to intrude themselves into the Federal sphere. As a result, the political life of most of the colonies towards the close of the period was almost devoid of interest.

In various ways New South Wales was an exception to the general rule, and its political history during this time was of great interest; indeed, party politics had never been so eager or so active. The Dibbs Government had maintained itself in office until 1894, when, a dissolution of Parliament having taken place, it retired routed at the polls. During the greater part of its three years of office its parliamentary majority was slight and difficult to maintain, and although its management of business during the bank crisis was bold, well conceived, and successful, and, moreover, deserving of much praise, its ordinary administration was viewed with great disfavour by the public at large, which saw with contempt the strategies and subterfuges to which the Government resorted in order

to remain in power. Parkes had refused the leadership of the Opposition or Free Trade Party on the accession of Dibbs to office in 1891, and in default of an acceptable candidate, the party with considerable hesitation and even reluctance elected G. H. Reid to the position. Reid carried on the electoral campaign of 1894 with such vigour as to surprise both partisans and opponents, and the constituencies gave him a majority over the combined forces of Protection and Labour. Reid met Parliament with a fine array of legislative proposals, and during its single session, lasting from 7th August 1894 to 5th July of the following year, his Ministers presented sixty-four Bills. Forty of these failed to pass, and of those that did pass only one, a Crown Lands Bill, was of major importance. Five important Bills were lost: the Trades Disputes Bill and the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill were lost in the Council; the Local Government Bill and the Customs Duties Bill were dropped in the Assembly, and the Coal Mines Regulation Bill was stopped by the prorogation of Parliament. Reid undoubtedly attempted too much, but, in any circumstances, his Free Trade and his proposals for direct taxation were vastly disliked by the Legislative Council, which lost no opportunity of obstructing him and throwing discredit upon his Government. Reid might reasonably have refused to carry on until the composition of the Council was brought into harmony with that of the constituencies, but he preferred the heroic course of dissolving the Assembly after a life of about eleven months, and appealing to the people. He fought the elections with great vigour, and asked the country for a mandate in the first place to reform the Legislative Council, and in the second to abolish customs duties of a protective character and in place thereof to impose land and income taxes. The country responded to the call. Parkes, Wise, and Dibbs, the three ablest and most prominent men opposed to Reid, lost their seats, and the Ministry came back with a large majority over the Protectionists, though not sufficiently large, in view of the lukewarm support which

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it was likely to get from some of the Free Traders, to make it independent of the Labour Party.

In the first session of the new Parliament Reid was able to pass four Bills of great importance : the Federal Enabling Bill, the Customs Duties Bill, the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, and the Public Service Bill ; a large number of minor measures were also passed. No sign, however, was made of the promised reform of the Legislative Council. Reid proved himself a great battler on the floor of Parliament and an acute judge of political weather, but his constructive statesmanship was of a very indifferent order. He had clamoured for local government during the whole of his parliamentary career and had satisfied his political conscience by introducing a Local Government Bill, which he dropped when the Assembly refused to sanction a form of plural voting in favour of property owners, entirely out of keeping with the spirit of the times or the requirements of the situation. The Land and Income Tax Acts were passed in a form which made their administration most difficult, and several of his other principal measures suffered from a like defect. The Reid Government, however, could claim the distinction of passing an Act for the regulation of the public service of the country, which freed the public departments from political control and interference, making merit the only qualification for admittance to the service and for promotion.

The Dibbs Government, which preceded that of Reid, had maintained itself in office very greatly by the exercise of its public service patronage, and the conciliation of local interests by the use of the money at the disposal of the Public Works Department. It is to the credit of the Reid Government that it relied on no such adventitious aids to maintain itself in power ; indeed, the dogged honesty of several of the Ministers, notably of Young, the Minister for Works, was often a cause of serious offence to log-rolling supporters both in and out of Parliament. The Government as a whole was opposed to Federation, and this at first

seemed to make for political safety, as during Reid's first and second Parliaments Federation was the cherished aspiration of the few, the bulk of the electorate being either hostile or indifferent to the change. But the Federal sentiment in New South Wales increased unexpectedly both in volume and in intensity. This Reid shrewdly recognized, hence his Yes-no-ism, which irritated his party, conciliated nobody, and greatly injured his parliamentary prestige. Thenceforward the history of the Reid Government becomes largely the history of its connexion with the scheme of Federation and of its relations with the Labour Party, which were now on strictly business lines, unmarked by any trace of their old cordiality.

The chief characteristic of the period, so far as Victoria was concerned, was the loss by that colony of a large portion of its population. It is estimated that during the nine years 1892 to 1900 about 114,000 persons, the great majority being male adults in the prime of life, quitted the colony in order to find occupation elsewhere. Melbourne and the large towns furnished the bulk of these emigrants, a great many of whom went to Western Australia, which fortunately was able to receive them, while others sought homes in Queensland and New Zealand. Happily for Victoria there had been substantial progress in agriculture, dairying, and mining, even in the boom time, and it can be said with little exaggeration that while the people of Melbourne were dreaming of riches to be acquired by disregarding all the canons of sound progress, the rest of the colony contented itself with steady work on sound lines; consequently, when the crash came, its effects were not overwhelming as in the metropolis. The pastoral industry, however, felt acutely the withdrawal of financial support, and pastoralists and farmers alike suffered from low prices.

To Patterson, who held office during the crisis and whose fatuous "we are all floundering" has become historic, succeeded Turner in September 1894, who devoted himself to the task of keeping the public expenditure

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within the income. He was at last able to accomplish this, the year 1897 being the first for eight years to show a surplus of income. For over five years Turner maintained himself in office, during the greater part of the time by the toleration of the Labour Party, and it was not until after a General Election that he was able to throw off its yoke. The administration of the Turner Government was of the narrow order usually associated with municipal government and, apart from finance, or compulsion from its Labour supporters, was weak and timorous. Turner was displaced by a cabal amongst his own supporters, not long after the Bill to establish Federation had been accepted by the colony, and Allan McLean became Premier. The charge against the Turner Government was that it was incompetent in its departmental administration, but the new Premier made no change in the policy of the Government nor any essential alteration in the general conduct of affairs. This was quite natural, as the chief preoccupation of politicians in Victoria, as in all the other colonies, was to be in office when the Commonwealth was established. The efforts of McLean were therefore directed to maintain his position until the end of the parliamentary session, which would ensure his being in the first Federal Ministry; Turner's efforts were no less directed to displace him. In the ordinary course of events the Victorian Parliament would have been prorogued shortly before Christmas 1900, but McLean failed to carry on till the time of prorogation, as on 15th November he was overthrown on a motion of censure. Turner again became Premier, and a few weeks later joined the first Commonwealth Ministry as Treasurer.

The pastoral and agricultural industries of Tasmania remained stationary during the greater part of this period, but there was marked progress in other directions. The business of fruit cultivation, for which Tasmania is by soil and climate well adapted, was soundly developed; the impetus which the successful working of the tin deposits gave to the colony in 1876 was sustained during the

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following years and increased by gold discoveries during the 'eighties, by the development of rich silver mines in the 'nineties, and, above all, towards the close of the period, by important discoveries of copper ore which made the island the largest copper producer of the Commonwealth.

The coming of large numbers of miners to Tasmania consequent on these various discoveries changed the whole aspect of political and industrial life. Actually, and as compared with the rest of the population, the number of miners coming to Tasmania was not so great as to Western Australia, but the effect of their coming was much the same. The political life of the country gradually passed from the control of the native-born element, in Tasmania a highly conservative body, to the democratic section now largely reinforced by new arrivals. Nor was the economic change less remarkable. In former years patriotic Tasmanians were chagrined to see how prone were the young men to desert their colony as soon as opportunity presented itself. Now Tasmania was able to retain its sons and entice back some of those who had left it for the mainland. Politically there is nothing of importance to chronicle. To Dobson succeeded Braddon, and to Braddon, Lewis, in the Premiership of the little state, and to the uninitiated there seemed little difference in their politics. The real political change which was taking place in Tasmania was accomplished outside Parliament.

The attitude of Tasmania towards Federation deserves a special word. At various times the colony had felt its isolation very keenly, and on more than one occasion it had proposed fiscal union with one or other of the mainland colonies, and even the idea of annexation to Victoria had met with some support. The question of Federation was therefore not one of party; the people of Tasmania, including even the politicians, were united in welcoming a union that would bring them closer to their neighbours.

The history of South Australia from 1893 to 1901 is

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really the history of the relations of the Labour Party with the Government, or rather with Kingston, who was Premier during the greater part of the period and, whether in or out of office, by far the most conspicuous figure in South Australian politics. The story of these relations is set out at some length in the chapter dealing with the parliamentary Labour Party in South Australia and need not be repeated here. In general politics the most interesting event of the time was the passing of the Adult Suffrage Bill in 1894, under which the political franchise was conferred upon women. South Australia in this followed the example of New Zealand, which had given votes to women during the previous year.

In Western Australia the necessity for sending out great exploratory expeditions no longer existed, but the Government and the colonists were indefatigable in filling up the blank spaces on the map of the colony, and the official Year-books record nine expeditions between 1893 and the end of the century.

During the same period the domestic record of the colony is an interesting, though unexciting, catalogue of railway and public works construction, and the official historiographer is compelled, for the lack of anything more diverting, to set down amongst his notable events the handing in by the Penal Commission of its final progress report and the completion of a new ballroom and other important additions to Government House, Perth, both of these momentous events occurring in March 1899. The only political event of importance was the separation movement, having for its object the establishment of the goldfields district as a separate province. The movement arose from a feeling in the principal mining towns that there was a lack of attention to their interests and a slackness on the part of the Government in regard to Federation. On 3rd January 1900 there was a conference of goldfields delegates at Kalgoorlie, which drew up and issued a manifesto justifying the demand for separation, and on 17th March a petition signed by some 27,000 persons was

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handed to the Governor asking that the eastern goldfields might be erected into an independent colony. This was backed up by a petition from the Albany or King George's Sound district, praying for the inclusion of that district in the proposed new colony. The swift march of events in connexion with Federation robbed the petitioners of the larger part of their grievances. The separation of the goldfields would have been a great blow to the economic progress of the remainder of the colony and would have been most strongly resisted by the old settlements. Moreover, the residents of the goldfields realized that after Federation it would be only a matter of a comparatively short time before equality of treatment would be meted out to the goldfields areas in regard to electoral representation, and with due representation the grievance in regard to unfair treatment in the matter of local expenditure would disappear.

The change in Western Australia during the closing years of the century was very great, and this change was not merely in the development of its resources and population but even more in its internal policy and external outlook. The coming of the gold-miner brought strength to the agricultural and cattle industries; the area under crop was much more than doubled between 1893 and 1900, and the number of cattle increased in like proportion. The change in the character of the population is best indicated by the difference between the political outlook in 1891 and that of ten years later. When the first Parliament of the colony met it was found to be an assemblage of representatives of the old colonial interests with a few newcomers; in 1901 the colony sent as its representatives to the Federal Parliament two Labour senators out of six and two Labour members out of five in the House of Representatives. The gold discoveries brought about a revolution in Western Australia very similar to that following the great rush in the 'fifties to Victoria and New South Wales. The working of the new leaven was speedily seen in the action of the colony in regard to Federation, the

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principle of union being adopted as soon as the popular voice was heard. How greatly the original settlers were outnumbered may be gathered from the fact that in 1901 there were settled in Western Australia about 72,000 adult Australians from the eastern colonies, and about 30,000 British-born, all comparatively of recent arrival. The total of these figures was considerably more than double that of the adults in the colony, whose interest in it dated from a period anterior to the gold discoveries.

What gold did for Western Australia is plainly shown by the increase of population, trade, and production. In 1891 its population after sixty years of settlement was still below 50,000 ; ten years later it had reached 184,000, while its capital, Perth, a town of 8000 inhabitants in 1891, had grown to 36,000. Trade showed even greater proportionate expansion ; from less than one million for the combined imports and exports in 1881 the total rose to two millions in 1891 and fifteen millions in 1901, and production, which was valued at only one and three-quarter millions sterling in 1891, had bounded up to twelve and a half millions in 1901.

The proclamation of the constitution conferring responsible government on Western Australia found the right man at hand. John Forrest was a native of Western Australia, and his name had been associated with the exploration and development of the colony for over twenty years when he was called upon to form the first Ministry. Forrest has the distinction of having held office as Premier for a longer period than any one since the introduction of responsible government into Australia ; he accepted office on 21st October 1890, and was still Premier in December 1900, when he joined the first Federal Administration.

He had been a prominent member of the Legislative Council, which the new constitution superseded, and in virtue of his office as Surveyor-General he was a member of the Executive Council. Naturally, therefore, he pursued the general policy of administration which he had favoured

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under the old régime, adjusting it to the new circumstances arising out of the extension of settlement to the gold areas. No longer hampered by the restrictions placed by the Colonial Office on the raising of money by means of loan operations, Forrest borrowed freely, and between his entering office and quitting it he increased the public debt of his colony from £1,367,444 to £14,942,310, which means that while the debt upon each inhabitant in 1891 was £30, it grew to be £72 in 1901. But the money though spent boldly was spent with good judgment, and the colony was soon in possession of many excellent railways and other public works; noteworthy amongst the latter was the Coolgardie Water Supply scheme, which conveyed water, collected and stored in a reservoir near the coast, 350 miles across an intervening desert to the goldfields, the pipe line being probably the longest in the world. Forrest saw three General Elections while in office, and survived all his original colleagues. One of these, H. W. Venn, ventured during 1897 to publish in the Press a minute in which he charged Forrest with want of loyalty to him in the administration of the Works and Railways departments. This was not the sort of thing Forrest was likely to submit to tamely, and Venn's outburst was followed by his dismissal from the Cabinet by a special act of the Governor. Forrest had trouble with the Legislative Council, as all Australian Premiers have had, but for the most part that branch of the Legislature recognized the Premier's zeal and ability, and helped him to pass his Bills. In 1894 there was a dispute between the two Houses in consequence of the Legislative Council amending a Loan Bill; in the end the Council withdrew its amendments, satisfying itself with stating that "it desired it to be distinctly understood that it in no way surrendered any powers, rights, and privileges to which it was legitimately entitled." By this formula the Council thought to save its face, but it did not again attempt to amend a Money Bill.

Forrest's attitude to Parliament is fairly illustrated by his treatment of the Opposition and the Council during the

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session of 1898. Leake, the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, had proposed an amendment to the Address-in-Reply which the Government refused to accept as a no-confidence motion. While the debate was in progress the Council passed a resolution antagonistic to the Government ; of this the Premier took no more notice than to say that he did not hold office at the pleasure of the Council, which indeed was true if not courteous. A few days later it was announced that the Cabinet had agreed to accept the Opposition amendment as a motion of no-confidence, but, on being put to the vote, the motion was lost by a majority of four to one. Later in the session a proposal made by the Government in connexion with its Education Bill was rejected ; the Opposition thereupon attacked the Government for not resigning when a vital principle in an important measure was defeated. Forrest, however, declined to look at the matter in that light, and a motion for the adjournment of the House was lost on the voices.

The Government would certainly have had more trouble with Parliament if the goldfields population had been adequately represented, but it was not until after the close of this period that the vote of a gold-miner was recognized as entitled to have the same parliamentary value as any other vote. Even in 1901, after the passing of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, which set up a new electorate system, the quota of electors for each goldfield representative was twice as great as for other representatives. After ten years of power Forrest surrendered office in order to join the first Federal Ministry, of which he was at first Postmaster-General and afterwards Minister for Home Affairs, and his reputation for leadership and capacity was not lessened by the political chaos in Western Australia which followed his retirement. John Forrest is undoubtedly one of the most considerable figures in Australian history, and one of the few native-born citizens of the Commonwealth who have risen to eminence by the display of political capacity.

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In Queensland the effects of the financial disruption were less disastrous than might have been anticipated. This may be attributed in part to the fact that the colony had already suffered heavily for its financial errors, and was on the road to recovery in 1893 when the crisis occurred, and in part to the fact that the actual condition of the National Bank was concealed in 1893 and only became known some three years later, when the colony was better able to bear the exposure. But for these circumstances Queensland might have felt the crisis as severely as did Victoria. During the early part of this period Queensland suffered severely from floods, and in the later years from destructive droughts. In February 1893 the watershed of the Brisbane River was devastated by floods, and two great bridges spanning the river were destroyed, as well as a vast amount of other property. Early in 1894 there was a return of destructive storms and floods, especially severe in the northern parts of the colony; and in 1895, for the third year in succession, the colony suffered a like infliction, extending to almost every district, with serious loss of life and damage to property. These climatic disturbances, coming at a time when the colony was suffering from the after-effects of a financial debauch, greatly retarded its recovery, and matters were made still worse for the pastoralist by the ravages of the tick pest, through which they lost large numbers of their stock. Coming, it is believed, originally from Java, the pest entered Queensland by way of the Northern Territory of South Australia and steadily worked its way eastward until it reached the Pacific coasts and the New South Wales border.

It was in the midst of the disorganization and distress attending the bank failures that the *Royal Tar* left Sydney with the first contingent of settlers for the New Australian colony in Paraguay. The emigrants were mainly from Queensland, where William Lane had been engaged for several years in proclaiming the blessings of the new Promised Land. Other detachments of intending settlers sailed in succeeding ships, and the total number of persons

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who left Australia for Paraguay was about 500. This experiment in colonization is one of the most interesting of modern times, and a detailed account of the events leading up to it will be found in a subsequent chapter.

It has been stated that in November 1890 Griffith, who was then Premier, so far entertained the demands of the separation party that he proposed to divide the colony into three semi-independent states. The matter was not proceeded with further at the time but the separationists remained active, and in 1893 they succeeded in carrying a resolution in the Assembly affirming the desirableness of submitting to a Referendum the question of the separation of Central Queensland from the rest of the colony. This resolution was never acted on; although the agitation for separation continued, the imminence of Australian Federation took away much of its force and Queensland still remains undivided.

Payment of members of the Assembly had been in force since July 1889, but the sum allowed, £150 a year, was looked upon by its recipients as entirely inadequate. Pressure had been brought to bear on the Government to bring in a Bill raising the allowance, but there was a division in the Cabinet over the question. In the session of 1893 a resolution in favour of a Bill raising the parliamentary allowance to £300 a year, although opposed by the Premier, McIlwraith, was carried by 27 votes to 22. In October 1893 Sir Hugh Nelson became Premier, superseding McIlwraith, who became Chief Secretary. The new Government found it expedient to accede to the demands of the members of the Assembly for increased pay, and a Bill raising the parliamentary allowance to £300 a year was introduced as a Government measure and carried through the Assembly, only to be rejected in the Council by an overwhelming majority. This was in November 1894, and it was not until two years later that the increase was allowed by the Council.

A narrative of the industrial disputes of this period,

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and of the riotous proceedings in the Queensland Parliament arising therefrom, is given in the chapter on the Labour Party, elsewhere in this volume. All that it will be necessary to say here is that these disputes reached their climax in 1894 with the strike of the shearers, and, in Queensland, no less than in New South Wales, were attended by many deeds of violence.

What was locally known as the continuous Government, under McIlwraith, Nelson, Byrnes, and Dickson, remained in office from March 1893 to December 1899. Its continuity had a sinister significance. It was greatly concerned in the policy which previous Governments had initiated and carried on in regard to the Queensland National Bank, and in spite of the Labour Party's violent opposition it was able to maintain its benevolent policy towards that institution even after the worst disclosures had been made.

Nelson retained the Premiership until April 1898, when he became President of the Legislative Council. T. J. Byrnes succeeded Nelson, but death cut short his promising career and the Premiership fell to J. R. Dickson. A considerable section of the Ministerialists favoured the appointment of R. Philp and a split was imminent; the Ministerial differences were, however, composed and the only important political change lay with the Opposition. Glassey, who had the larger following, announced that his party would thenceforward consider themselves as the constitutional Opposition, while still retaining the title of the Labour Party, and Drake with the six members sitting with him formed themselves into an independent Opposition. The elevation of Dickson to the Premiership brought with it a change in the attitude of Queensland towards Federation. Hitherto the leading politicians, notably Nelson and Byrnes, had been lukewarm on the subject and, in consequence, Queensland had not sent delegates to the Federal Convention of 1897. Dickson was an ardent Federalist and set about accomplishing his

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ideals almost as soon as he became head of the Government. He succeeded in having Queensland represented at the Conference of Premiers in 1899, which followed the failure of the first referendum. A new Parliament was elected in Queensland in May 1899, which devoted itself almost solely to the passing of an Enabling Bill, and when a referendum was again taken Queensland voted by a large majority in favour of union.

The great question of Federation having been thus disposed of, the course of local politics was interrupted, as was the case in all the other colonies, and in December 1899 Dickson found himself ousted from the Premiership by Anderson Dawson, who had followed Glassey in the leadership of the Labour Party. Dawson's Cabinet was composed entirely of Labour members, but it did not last beyond a week, a vote of no-confidence moved by Philp being carried against it immediately Parliament met. The Philp Ministry was a continuation in power of the party that had ruled Queensland from the time of the Griffith-McIlwraith fusion, and its general policy ran on the same lines as that of its predecessors in office. In Australia, Ministries are disposed to take credit for the results of favourable seasons occurring during their term of office, and, *per contra*, there is a disposition on the part of the indiscriminating section of the public to blame a Ministry for unfavourable conditions of trade which may have been wholly due to seasonal causes. Philp entered office at a time when the country was beginning to be affected by bad seasons : indeed during his whole term of office the great producing interests of the colony suffered greatly from drought, and more or less on that account his Ministry was unpopular. But the alternative to a Philp Ministry was a Labour Government which would have neither the confidence of the people nor a parliamentary majority to keep it in power, and Philp remained in office.

On the outbreak of hostilities with the Boers in October 1899 each of the Australian colonies offered troops for

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South Africa, Queensland being the first to make an offer of the services of its men. It would be misleading to say the war was popular in Australia. It involved no danger to the Mother Country to awaken deep patriotism and call for sacrifice ; the rally to the flag was essentially prompted by a determination to support England whether right or wrong. There was, however, much indifference to the war and in all the colonies there was a strong minority opposed to it, but this minority was at no time articulate, as with one or two notable exceptions the Press supported with enthusiasm the action of the Imperial Government. Sympathizers with the Boers were found in all the political parties but were most numerous in the ranks of the Labour Party. In South Australia, Price, the leader of that party, at first refused to support the despatch of a contingent to South Africa, but in this he failed to win the approval of a large number of electors who voted for Labour, and when the despatch of a second contingent was imminent he announced a change of opinion. The war was no longer an instance of "British aggression carried out in the interest of capitalists," but "a just struggle on behalf of a disfranchised people." Amongst the New South Wales parliamentary Labour Party there were many strong opponents of the policy of sending troops to South Africa ; indeed it is probable the malcontents were in a majority. The matter was brought up at a caucus meeting and the discussion which took place convinced the party that open hostility to the war would be very prejudicial to a member's chances of re-election ; and it was thereupon decided not to oppose the despatch of troops. A few members, however, felt so strongly about the war that they could not be induced to remain silent, but the decision of the Government was never challenged.

In the other colonies the members of the Labour Parties were on the whole opposed to the war, but they too found it expedient not to make their opinions widely known, and the various contingents of troops were despatched

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from all the colonies not only without protest but with the seeming approbation of the bulk of the community. The troops were all voluntarily enlisted, and no difficulty was experienced in filling their ranks. The men were paid both by the British Government and the colonial authorities; from the latter they received 5s. per day and from the former 1s. per day; they therefore drew five times the pay of the Imperial soldiers alongside whom they fought. Altogether Australia sent to South Africa 16,415 mounted men, including 829 officers, and this force, small as it was, contrived to make itself of great value in bringing the war to a conclusion.

The greatest event of the period was the consummation of the Federal movement. Lord Hopetoun was appointed by the Imperial Government as Governor-General, and his first duty was to select the Prime Minister. In ordinary circumstances the Premier of New South Wales would have been the natural selection. It chanced that Lyne held that office. He was a man of narrow mind and small ability and had from the first strongly opposed the federation of the colonies, not, indeed, on any broad question of principle, but on grounds of mere provincialism. Nevertheless Hopetoun offered him the high and responsible office and Lyne without hesitation accepted it. Lyne's selection and acceptance were received throughout Australia with incredulity and even derision, yet he set about the task entrusted to him. His overtures were met by the public men of the Commonwealth with cold disdain, and, giving up the futile task, he accepted the almost unanimous advice of Press and public and recommended the Governor-General to send for Barton, who was acclaimed on all sides as the person most fitted, by ability and service in the cause of Federation, to preside over the Ministry which was to establish the machinery of the Government and guide the infant Commonwealth through the first and difficult stages of its existence. Barton chose as his colleagues the leading men of all the states whose opinions on the great fiscal question coincided with his own. The Commonwealth

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was thus successfully inaugurated, and the first Parliament was elected in March 1901 and opened by the Duke of York (now King George V.), who was delegated by King Edward to perform the august ceremony.

II

LAND LEGISLATION AND SETTLEMENT

NEW SOUTH WALES

WHEN the first effects of the crisis of 1893 had been surmounted, it was the universal opinion that the salvation of the colony lay in the direction of the better utilization of the land, access to which should be made easy for all citizens. The Dibbs Government, under the spur of the Labour Party, made haste to accommodate itself to this view and in May 1893 brought before Parliament the Associated Settlement Bill. This measure aimed at placing small communities on the land, and its general idea was undoubtedly suggested by the New Australia scheme of William Lane.

As introduced, the Bill contained provisions for two kinds of settlement. There were to be settlements in which persons of small capital would be helped to acquire small areas and settlements designed to help those without capital. In its course through Parliament the first part of the Bill was dropped and the title changed to the "Labour Settlements Bill," and as such it was passed in June 1893. It provided that suitable blocks of land might be leased to a Board of Control appointed for a Labour settlement. The leases were to run for twenty-eight years with a right of renewal for a further like term. No rent was demanded, and the Government was authorized to make advances to the extent of £15 for each unmarried settler, £20 for married persons without children, and £25

for married persons with children. These advances were to be made as loans to enable settlers to carry on until their land had been brought under cultivation. During the first four years the repayment of advances was not required, but thereafter settlers were asked to pay 4 per cent interest on their advances and 4 per cent to provide a sinking fund for their ultimate repayment. The money advanced by the Government was to be a debt of the community and was placed in the hands of the Board of Control, to be used by it in providing food and clothing for the settlers and certain implements required for the cultivation and development of the common area.

No time was wasted over preliminaries. Three sites were selected on public lands at Pitt Town, Bega, and Wilberforce, and though these were subsequently condemned as being unsuitable for the purposes of agriculture, this was not the opinion expressed at the time they were chosen. There was indeed a lack of permanent water, but this defect was curable, and otherwise the land was good. Wilberforce comprised an area of 882 acres, Bega 1360 acres, and Pitt Town 2100 acres.

Persons who desired to go to one of these settlements were instructed to apply to the Labour Bureau, and the Board of Control decided as to their admission. The men who offered themselves were drawn chiefly from the unemployed of Sydney, all were practically destitute and few were used to labour on the land.

The settlements might be wholly communal, or the communal system might be modified to the extent of allowing members to have plots which they could use for their exclusive benefit, provided a certain amount of work was performed on behalf of the community. It rested with the Board of Control to decide as to the time to be given to communal work and the method of working. Two of the settlements, Wilberforce and Bega, provided in their regulations that their settlers might obtain separate plots, but all were required to give forty-eight hours' labour

each week for the community; the Pitt Town settlement was planned on strictly communal lines.

Stores were sold to the settlers at wholesale rates; the allowances made to them being just enough to supply them and their dependents with a sufficiency of plain food, as those responsible for the working of the Act looked forward to the communities being self-supporting within a year. The settlements, however, had been established too late in the season to allow a crop of cereals to be obtained, and during the summer of 1893-94 only vegetables were grown. The allowances to the settlers and the capital expenses of the communal settlements absorbed the Government grants, and it became necessary for these to be increased to enable the settlers to carry on until the next harvest. In 1894, therefore, the Labour Settlements Act was amended so as to double the amount authorized to be granted to the different classes of settlers.

The Wilberforce and Bega settlements, although the scenes of much wrangling and difficulty, maintained a struggling existence. During 1894 the regulations of the first named were altered, diminishing the hours of compulsory communal work and leaving the value of the rations issued to the discretion of the Board of Control. In 1895 the settlement contained 84 persons, and the advances made by the Government to the Board were estimated at £1940, while the improvements effected by the settlers were valued at £2532; in 1900 the number of settlers was reduced to 75, and the value of their improvements was considered to be not more than £2100. In 1895 the Bega settlement contained 19 men with their wives and 77 children, 115 persons in all, and the improvements effected by the labour of the settlers were valued at £1253, but the Government had made advances to the extent of £1350, and had therefore paid to the settlement more than the value of the improvements. There was an increase of population in the following years, and at the end of 1900 there were 28 men, 29 women, and 140 children on the settlement; during the same time the value of the

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improvements was increased to £2296, but the Government advances had been also increased and stood at £2421. Both settlements continue existing to this day but as very unimportant affairs, and have done nothing that would seem to have warranted their establishment.

The settlers for Bega left Sydney on 19th July 1893 and were the first to depart. The party consisted of 17 men, 12 women, and 32 children, and taking steamer to Tathra, 186 miles south from Sydney, carried with them some stores and tents for use until huts could be built. In August the Wilberforce settlers arrived at their destination, and those for Pitt Town in the following month. Boards of Control were constituted at each place to direct the work of the settlers. No money was paid directly to the settlers, but allowances in kind were made weekly; at Pitt Town the rate was 4s. per man, 2s. per woman, and 1s. 6d. per child, and at Bega and Wilberforce slightly larger allowances were made.

The settlement at Pitt Town was on a much larger scale than the others; it was the most accessible, and the majority of the applicants expressed a preference for it over Bega or Wilberforce. Some, however, of those who offered themselves withdrew when they found there would be no allotment of land to individuals, and in the councils of the settlers there were always advocates of separate allotments, but the settlement remained communal to the end. The original population of Pitt Town comprised 82 men and their wives, 5 widows, 13 single men, and 251 children, in all 433 persons. As the settlers entered on their land in September, there was no likelihood of much return being obtained for more than twelve months, and the Government undertook to continue its grants to married persons and their families, no assistance being given to single men.● There had been many disagreements amongst the settlers. Almost at the beginning there were quarrels in regard to the distribution of work and demands for the alteration of the constitution of the settlement, so as to allow of separate allotments being

given, as at Bega, to individuals; later on there were numberless small wrangles of the meanest kind between the members, and when the Government withdrew its assistance from unmarried men there was a speedy diminution in the number of settlers. At the end of 1895 only 129 persons remained on the settlement, and three months later the number was reduced to 104. All hope of making the settlement self-supporting now disappeared, and the men who remained ceased doing communal work and maintained themselves chiefly by cutting wood and selling it outside the settlement. In March 1896 the Government decided to make no further advances. It had already paid away £7700 on account of the settlers, and an order was given that the place should be abandoned. There was some difficulty in carrying out this order, as a few of the settlers clung tenaciously to the bare and comfortless huts they had erected, but in June 1896 the Pitt Town land was placed under the Department of Public Instruction in order that it might be converted into a casual labour farm.

An inventory of the settlement showed that the improvements made by the settlers consisted of 90 huts, all of the roughest description, built of slabs and unlined, with wooden bunks, seats, and tables; there was also a saw-mill and a bullock team and plant. A good deal of timber had been felled but no attempt had been made to grub out the roots, so that proper cultivation was impossible. The labour given had been of a very poor quality and ill-directed; the atmosphere of the settlement had been poisoned by the continual bickering, and very few settlers had made an attempt to work the communal system fairly.

The failure of the settlement at Pitt Town was more complete than that of Bega and Wilberforce, but the real failure of all three is shown by the fact that after 1893 not a single labour group was formed, although 1894 was a year of more severe distress among the working classes than the preceding one. Very high hopes had been

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entertained of the success of the experiment of labour settlements in New South Wales, but the faults inherent in such schemes of communal labour displayed themselves quickly and obviously, and, together with the failure of the New Australia scheme, were convincing proof that not in such direction lay the solution of the difficulties of labour and unemployment.

The Labour Settlement Act was an exceptional economic measure apart from the general agrarian policy of the colony, and when the Dibbs Government was displaced in July 1894 the new Government lost no time in introducing a Crown Lands Bill, in response to a general demand and in redemption of its own political pledges.

The authors of the Lands Acts of 1884 and 1889 had claimed that, as a result of their legislation for safeguarding the pastoral industry by guaranteeing the squatters a secure tenure of half their runs, the secular struggle between them and the free selectors would come to an end, dummying or bogus selection would disappear, genuine settlement would be promoted, and larger and still larger areas of land would be given over to cultivation. But in spite of several good features the Lands Acts of 1884 and 1889 failed just as conspicuously to promote settlement as did the Robertson Act which they superseded. The evil condition of settlement under the Acts of 1861 and 1884 was described by Carruthers in introducing his Bill to the Assembly in September 1894, and there can be no doubt that the following quotation from his speech aptly sums up the situation, which arose through the operation of those Acts: "In 1861 . . . we had 159,834 residents in our towns and 189,116 residents in the country districts; but after thirty years, under the operation of our present land system, we have 730,000 residents in the towns as against only 388,321 in the country districts. The tide of population has flowed from the country where the land is plentiful to the towns where land is scarce; . . . nearly 50,000,000 acres have been sold to settle barely 200,000 people in the country districts, whilst prior to 1861, before

we had our present system, 189,000 residents were settled on 7,350,000 acres of alienated land. . . . The holdings in the country in 1861 were represented by 15,650 occupants. . . . To-day, with our enormous alienation, the holdings are represented by 41,400 occupants ; or, in other words, over 50,000,000 acres have been alienated since 1861, or are now in course of alienation, for an increase of 25,750 rural occupants. . . . Take the figures how you will, there is barely a ray of sunlight in them." The Minister might have added some damaging points in regard to the scant progress made in agriculture, and the tendency rather to acquire land than to use it. The greater part of the sold lands was fertile and had sufficient rainfall to enable general cultivation to be successfully pursued. The usual explanation of this lack of agricultural progress was the difficulty of obtaining easy access to the principal markets of the colony. This indeed was true of a large part of the sold lands, but of the 56,000,000 acres remaining untilled in 1895, a large area was within easy distance of Sydney, was admirably adapted to cultivation, and would have been cultivated if the people who owned it had been agriculturally inclined.

The authors of the Lands Act of 1884 expected that the security of tenure given to squatters would free them from the necessity of further extensive purchases of land, as their holdings were now immune from the incursions of the free selector and the blackmailer. But the craving for land grows by what it feeds on. The opportunities still afforded by the law of 1884 for the increase of their estates were no less eagerly embraced by the squatters than those of the Robertson Act, and the accumulation of large estates grew apace. It is true that the wholesale alienation of land at auction or by unconditional selection after auction and by pre-emptive and improvement purchases was stopped, but other means to acquire land were offered, and the colony saw the sorry spectacle of some of its best lands, which had been originally purchased conditionally, and were expected to be the

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homes of thriving settlers, added to already over-large estates.

In 1895 there were already in New South Wales 327 estates, each with an area in excess of 20,000 acres; and 137 of these embraced 11,000,000 acres of freehold land with vast tracts of leased lands attached, together comprising an area far larger than the whole of Ireland, of which hardly more than 10,000 acres were devoted to cultivation.

The failure of the Lands Act of 1884 to promote genuine settlement, and the continued formation of large estates, were matters of critical discussion during the period following the bank failures, and there was a general agreement as to the urgent necessity of introducing entirely new principles into the agrarian legislation of the colony. The Act of 1895 maintained the subdivision of the country into land divisions and land districts; the principle of decentralization of administration, which the Act of 1884 had introduced and experience had proved of considerable value, and the restriction of auction sales to 200,000 acres a year were retained, as well as various minor modes of alienation which were required to meet special circumstances. The framers of the Act of 1895 prided themselves on the fact that nothing was proposed by them which savoured of repudiation, so there was no provision made for checking the transfers of conditional purchases, which was one of the great evils of the Acts of 1861 and 1884; nor was there any disturbance of the principle of free selection before survey, which was the corner-stone of both measures; but from all new selectors a residence of ten years was required instead of five years as demanded by the Act of 1884. The price of selected land, £1 per acre, remained the same as well as the deposit of 2s. per acre made at the time of selection; but as compensation for the additional period of residence, the new Act gave the selector three years' free tenure before the instalments of 1s. per acre in payment of interest and principal were made payable. The Act of 1884 had

permitted a selector who had not acquired the full area allowed by law, 640 acres in the Eastern Division and 2560 acres in the Central Division, to take up the additional area required to bring his holding up to the maximum without demanding the performance of any conditions ; but the new Act, while conceding the privilege of additional selection, required for all such selections the same condition of residence, namely, ten years, as for a new purchase, and this requirement was extended to purchases made in virtue of selections acquired under the superseded Acts.

The right of a selector to acquire a conditional lease of land contiguous to his holding was continued by the Act of 1895. The area that could be so obtained was not altered, and the new Act gave the material concession of an extension of the term of the lease from fifteen to twenty-eight years ; this extension was given equally to old as to new conditional purchasers. The annual rent payable for a conditional lease was to be determined at its commencement by the local Land Board, and the rent, so fixed, stood for fifteen years, when a fresh appraisalment was to be made for the remainder of the term. While, therefore, the Act of 1895 imposed an additional period of residence on conditional purchasers, so as to put a check on the operations of the professional selector and the squatters' dummy, the genuine selector was more than compensated by the considerable extension of his lease, and was confirmed in his right of pre-emption over the whole of the leased area.

Although by the provisions of the Act of 1895 free selection was in a certain sense made more attractive, to the man of small means, the Act offered in homestead selections a still greater attraction, and this form of purchase was its outstanding feature. The principle of free selection before survey was abandoned in regard to homestead selections, and it was provided that tracts of land were to be surveyed, cut up into blocks and valued, and these blocks offered for the selection of any person who had attained the age of sixteen years and had the usual legal

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qualifications. The area of a homestead selection was fixed according to the quality of the land, and the blocks, though in no case exceeding 1280 acres, were made sufficiently large for the maintenance in comfort of a farmer and his family. While the tenure of the land was described as freehold, the title was subject to the payment of rent and the residence of the owner in perpetuity. From a person applying for a homestead a deposit was required, and, when his application was accepted, rent was payable at the annual rate equivalent to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent of the capital value of the land. At the end of five years, if all conditions had been duly observed, a grant of the land was issued and the owner was free to dispose of his property; but the conditions of residence and rent were imposed on the new owner and his successors. On the issue of a grant the rent was increased to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the capital value, and at this it remained. The estimate of the capital value made when the land was offered for sale was to stand for fifteen years, when there was to be a new valuation, repeated thereafter at intervals of ten years.

The only stipulation made by law for the improvement of a homestead was for the provision of a dwelling valued at £20, and eighteen months was allowed for its erection. The interest of a holder in his homestead selection was made forfeitable, if the conditions of residence and improvement were not fulfilled or the rent not paid. Any improvements on the land when it was first acquired were to be paid for by the selector in four equal yearly instalments with interest added at the rate of 4 per cent per annum, and the selector was given tenant right in these and any improvements effected by him should his holding be surrendered or become forfeit.

If at least twenty homestead selectors desired to form a village adjacent to their holdings, the condition of residence might be dispensed with by the authorities, and permission given for its fulfilment in the village.

A distinguishing feature of the Act was the privilege given to a selector of protecting his homestead against

being sold under a writ of execution, or taken from him in case of insolvency; but in order to obtain this immunity the selector had to register his homestead and to be solvent at the time of registration.

Only one homestead could be taken up by the same person, an exception being made in the case of a person who was compelled by adverse circumstances to abandon his holding; but in such case it was necessary that a certificate to that effect should be obtained from the Land Board.

If a person who was desirous of taking up a homestead selection was debarred by his calling, or other satisfactory reason, from performing in person the condition of residence, the Land Board was empowered to relieve him of the obligation, and sanction residence by deputy; but the Board was required to satisfy itself that it was the intention of the applicant to take up his residence on his selection when circumstances permitted him to do so. In such cases, however, special conditions were imposed. The rent chargeable before the issue of the grant was fixed at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the capital value of the land instead of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, and the value of the dwelling-house to be erected was increased to £40; within three years one-tenth of the area was required to be in full tillage, and by the end of the fifth year the land in tillage was required to be at least one-fifth of the area selected.

To free selectors special inducements were offered for the conversion of their holdings into homestead selections. In the case of any such conversions the rent charge was fixed at 6d. per acre for an ordinary purchase, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the original price of a purchase within a special area, and the money already paid by the selectors, not being interest on the outstanding balance of the purchase price, was to be credited towards the future payments of rent.

The system of homestead selection offered to a person of slender means many important advantages. No improvements were required except the erection of a dwelling,

which in any case would have been necessary, and the holder was secure against distraint or disturbance by any legal process. The money payments demanded from him were extremely light. In the case of a holding of 640 acres, to possess which was the usual ambition of a selector, the payment required during the first year was only £10 : 13 : 9, which was one-seventh of the sum demanded from a free selector; during the second and third years the advantage, it is true, was with the free selector, who was not required to make any payments, while the homestead purchaser would still have to pay £10 : 13 : 9. Thereafter the payments were all in his favour, and in the sixth year the homestead selector would pay £16 as compared with £32 required from the free selector.

The changes made by the Act of 1895 in the law regarding leases were chiefly in the direction of improving the position of the leaseholders by extending their tenure from twenty-one to twenty-eight years. Two new forms of lease were introduced. Special areas for agriculture or grazing were to be set apart by *Gazette* notification, and the land measured and valued according to its capabilities and situation. If the land were deemed fit for agriculture the area leased was not to be more than 1280 acres; if for grazing only, the area might extend to 10,240 acres. The term of the lease was in all cases twenty-eight years, and the annual rental $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent on the assessed capital value. The conditions attaching to a lease were continuous residence, the enclosure of the land within five years, and the carrying out of any regulations made by competent authority for the extirpation of noxious animals and the clearing of scrub from the land. The lessee was given the right of application to have that part of his lease on which his residence stood granted to him as a homestead selection, but the area he could so acquire was limited to 1280 acres. A settlement lease could be assigned or sublet if the consent of the Minister for Lands were sought and obtained.

Improvement leases of scrub or inferior lands could be

granted for the term of twenty-eight years at a rental determined by auction or tender, the Government being entitled to fix an upset price and to reject an offer even if in excess of the reserve. There were no set rules for the improvement of the land; these were to be specified in the lease according to the circumstances of each case, and the last holder of a lease had tenant right in any improvement effected. Residence upon an improvement lease was not compulsory, but if a lessee elected to reside on his holding he was given the privilege, during the last year of his term, of converting his residence, with 640 acres surrounding it, into a homestead selection, provided the land had been improved to the extent of £1 per acre.

While the Act of 1895 gave an extension of seven years to the currency of pastoral leases, it authorized the withdrawal of land up to one-half the area of leases in the Central Division, and one-eighth of the area of those in the Western Division, should such land be required for settlement. No money compensation was claimable in regard to such withdrawals, but the leaseholder was given an extension of the term of the lease for the remainder of his land commensurate to the area withdrawn from him, and, on the other hand, the Act provided that if land resumed from a pastoral holding under the Act of 1884 was not required, or likely to be required, for settlement purposes, such land might be added to the holding from which it was taken and included in the pastoral lease.

The Act of 1895 was very favourably received by all parties interested in land matters, as a thoughtful contribution to the settlement of many vexed questions. While land required for genuine settlement was made available by the provision under which a moiety of a holding could be taken from a pastoralist, the latter would be usually content with the extension of the lease for the land remaining in his hands. The extension of the term of residence on a conditional purchase was a provision which would operate to prevent the taking up of speculative selections, while the new forms of alienation by homestead selection

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and settlement leases gave to persons of small means easy access to the land, and by the residence and other provisions security was given against these lands being added to the already numerous class of large estates.

Except in the rare case of a non-resident homestead selector, no demand was made for the cultivation of any portion of the land alienated under the Act. The Government recognized that the people of the colony were not instinctively an agricultural race, and that the habit of agriculture, being a tedious accomplishment for them to acquire, could not be forced upon them by legislation.

The Legislative Assembly which considered the Land Bill of 1895 contained in it an element of single taxers, more powerful perhaps in their enthusiasm and debating strength than in actual numbers; and several members of Reid's Government were sympathetic with their views. This parliamentary party, while firmly supporting the Bill as a whole, would have welcomed a further advance along the lines of their principles, even to the extent of the entire stoppage of all forms of absolute alienation, conditional as well as auction sales, but the majority of Parliament was against them, as undoubtedly were the constituencies.

Homestead selection was a form of perpetual leasehold disguised under specious terms; while it was approved by a Parliament disgusted with the failure of past legislation to promote settlement, it was accepted as one of several modes under which the public lands might be disposed of, and the principle of freehold purchase remained unrepealed. The single taxers looked upon homestead selection, settlement and improvement leases, as an instalment of their demands, and did not go to any great length in their opposition to the retention of the principle of direct sales; hoping that a sympathetic administration of the Act would give them what they were contending for, by greatly curtailing the area open to be purchased unconditionally, and by the bulk of the unsold lands being gazetted in due course, as homestead areas, or

offered to the land-seeker under other forms of leasehold tenure. As it chanced, free selection was greatly reduced during the first few years of the operation of the Act of 1895, and, under sympathetic administration, large areas were taken up as homestead selections; but after 1899 free selection came into its own again, and the disposal of land in homestead selections fell off considerably. The population at large could not be induced to forgo its inclination for an actual freehold in favour of any other form of purchase, even if the terms of a freehold, translated into pounds, shillings, and pence, compared unfavourably with those of other tenures.

Like all other New South Wales agrarian legislation the Act of 1895 was no sooner passed than it was found to require amendment. There were two amendments in 1896, an important one in 1899, and others more or less noteworthy at subsequent times after the close of this period. All these amendments were in the same direction, namely, the amelioration of the condition of the actual settler by giving him, if he should be a leaseholder, a longer tenure and a reduction of rent; if a conditional purchaser, an adjustment of the terms of his purchase to the actual value of the land and a reduction in the rate of interest on the unpaid balances of the purchase price.

The principal Act of 1896 gave authority for the reduction of the annual payments on conditional purchases from 1s. to 9d., and even to 6d. per acre, provided the reduced rate of payment allowed of the unpaid balance being liquidated in sixty-six years. This concession was however confined, as a general rule, to persons "whose home and place of abode" was on the holding in respect to which the concession was sought. The interest payable on the balance of purchase money due to the Crown on selections taken up before 1st January 1885 and not brought under the Act of 1884, was reduced to 4 per cent, thus making the interest uniform for all land-purchase balances. In the Act of 1896 there were various provisions for facilitating the conversion of conditional pur-

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chases into homestead selections, which were interesting as showing the sympathy of the administration with the last-named form of tenure; but these and subsequent provisions of a like nature were little used. The Act of 1899 was a very important piece of legislation. The authors of the Lands Act of 1895 were no longer in power, and the general tendency of the new legislation was to ameliorate the condition of a free selector who had paid a higher price than the productive capacity of his land warranted. The assessments for the Land Tax, which had been carried out in 1896, had brought to light the fact that a large number of selections, which the owners had contracted to pay for at the rate of £1 an acre, were worth much less, and in many instances the balance of the purchase-money outstanding exceeded the value of the land. Under the Act of 1899 the holder of a conditional purchase could have his holding reappraised, and if valued at less than £1 per acre, in the case of an ordinary purchase, could have an adjustment in the capital cost and in the payments to meet interest and principal. But in return for such concession residence on the land for five years was required, unless the person seeking relief was the original holder of the selection or a legatee of such holder, or a person whom the local Land Board thought might be excused. The right to claim reappraisement of rent was conceded by this Act to conditional leases, homestead selections, and settlement leases.

The introduction of the principle of reappraisement into past purchases destroyed the long-cherished custom of land administrators of fixing £1 per acre as the value of lands open for purchase, and this departure from traditional policy was emphasized by the Act of 1899 in its provision for setting apart lands at a special price either above or below £1 per acre, according to quality, and throwing these open to free selection or lease.

The Land Act of 1895 did not stop the alienation of public lands, but it was not the intention of its framers to do so. From the close of the year 1894 to that of 1900,

3,404,000 acres were sold, and 676,000 acres became forfeit, and thus the actual alienation during the six years was 2,728,000 acres, which is a not inconsiderable area. Nor was the formation of large estates impeded by the Act. The official returns show that while in 1894 estates with areas ranging from 1000 to 10,000 acres held 11,835,000 acres, in 1900 estates of a like class held 13,306,000 acres, and estates with areas above 10,000 acres held 20,310,000 acres in 1894 and 22,639,000 in 1900. This increase in estates of large area was effected by the transfer of conditional purchases which the Act of 1894 did not interfere with, and which continued, long after the end of this period, until a deliberate policy of breaking up these estates was adopted by Parliament.

From this point of view of effective settlement the most satisfactory feature of the period was the progress of agriculture, and for a country where agricultural development was characteristically slow an increase from 1,310,000 acres under crop in 1894 to 2,342,000 acres in 1900 should be considered somewhat noteworthy. This increased attention to production after the crisis is discussed under Trade and Commerce. It will be seen that it was brought about by economic necessity, following on a reaction from the unsound conditions of the boom years, and was accompanied throughout the colonies by attempts to adjust the land laws to the new circumstances. In order not to impede production, the Act of 1895 demanded from persons taking up land a much smaller initial outlay than was required under the systems which it sought to supersede, and for this reason such persons were in a better position to develop their holdings than if the Act had not been passed. But increased attention to production of all kinds was a common feature of all the colonies during the period, and the effect of agrarian legislation in promoting this increase in any particular colony may be easily overestimated.

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VICTORIA

The Lands Act of 1890, as amended in 1891, was in its main features designed to restrict the sales of land, but already the greater part of the best lands of the colony were in private hands. Apart from reserves for specific purposes, roads and river beds, the public lands comprised 25,200,000 acres, or 44 per cent of the total area of the colony, but this included 11,600,000 acres of Mallee lands and the eastern mountainous area. Exclusive of the Mallee country, it was officially estimated that there were available for settlement at the end of 1892, 4,363,000 acres of agricultural and grazing lands and 1,931,000 acres of pastoral lands. The collapse of 1893 forced upon the Parliament of Victoria the consideration of the question of the better utilization of these lands and of the Mallee. Between the bank crisis and the close of the period five Lands Acts were passed, several of considerable length, designed to give free access to the lands still at the disposal of the State, and to acquire from private owners rich agricultural land for purposes of closer settlement.

Before the broader questions were taken up it was deemed desirable to provide a means of finding employment for the unemployed labour of the colony, which the financial troubles had vastly increased. For this purpose a measure entitled the "Settlement on Lands Act" was passed in August 1893, which provided for three classes of rural settlements, viz. village communities, homestead associations, and labour colonies, each of these being specifically designed to enable the unemployed to reach the land. As to the first named, it provided that certain areas were to be set apart for village communities, within which allotments varying in size from 1 to 20 acres might be granted for three years to suitable applicants, at a yearly rental of 6d. per acre. On the expiry of this probationary term the occupier might be given a lease for twenty years, during which he was to pay 6d. an acre per half-year; besides this, he was to refund the cost of

surveying his block and any moneys advanced to him for improvements. The lessee was required to bring one-tenth of his land into cultivation during the first two years and as much more in the next two years, and, in addition, to make improvements of the value of £1 per acre during the first six years. These conditions being fulfilled, he was entitled to a grant of the land at the expiration of the lease.

Homestead associations were designed for the purpose of meeting the requirements of six or more persons desirous of settling near each other, and for the purpose of allowing the formation of these associations blocks of land not containing more than 2000 acres were set aside in different parts of the colony. In each such block an area of about 100 acres was reserved for a township, and the remaining area was divided into allotments not exceeding 50 acres each. From the township land a space of 40 acres or less was to be set aside permanently for the purposes of recreation, convenience, or amusement, and the remainder cut up into residential areas, each not larger than an acre. The holder of an allotment might have one of these residential areas set apart for him. The conditions as to residence, cultivation, improvement, and so forth were practically identical with those required from members of the village communities, and these being fulfilled, a member of a homestead selection became entitled to a grant of the land he occupied.

The Act permitted the Government to advance a sum not exceeding £15 to any member of a village community, or of a homestead association, for the purpose of making improvements on his allotment, the total of such advances in any one year not to be more than £20,000. An area of about 156,000 acres in eighty-five localities was set aside for the requirements of these communities and associations, but a large part of this land was found to be unsuitable, and was subsequently withdrawn. Within five years of the passing of the Act the settlers, with their families, numbered about 9100, and the improvements effected

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by them were valued at £150,000. The provision for the advance of money to settlers by the Government was not taken advantage of to any considerable extent, not more than £66,000 being advanced during five years, as most of the allotment-holders were in possession of some means of their own. So far, therefore, as the Act dealt with village communities and homestead associations, it can be reckoned as having fairly well accomplished its object.

For the establishing of labour colonies, to utilize the labour of destitute able-bodied men, it was provided that areas of land not exceeding 1500 acres in extent might be set apart and vested in trustees. It was intended that the money required to support the colonies should be provided partly by private charity and partly by the State, the latter adding £2 to every £1 obtained from public and private subscriptions. Provision was made for the election annually by the subscribers of a committee of four, who, with the trustees, were given the powers and authority necessary for the proper control and administration of the colony. Some private subscriptions were received when the proposal to form labour colonies was first made, but after the Settlement of Lands Act came into operation subscriptions fell away, and, as it happened, the State provided almost all the money required for the experiment.

A colony was established at Leongatha in Gippsland, about eighty miles from Melbourne, and the men who went there were at once set at work clearing the land of its heavy timber. On joining the colony each man was required to work on probation for a week, afterwards he was assigned a small wage, determined by the manager, out of which the cost of his support was paid, and the balance credited to him and paid in cash when he left the colony, or to his family as it was earned. The idea underlying the scheme was to fit town men for employment in the country districts, and eventually to enable them to take up a little land of their own. The men were housed in huts similar to those usually provided on well-kept stations. They were fed

on the produce of the colony, supplemented where necessary, and, except as regards wages, there was little difference between them and ordinary bush workers. The place, however, did not prove attractive. The total number of labourers who found refuge there during the seven years of this period was about 4000, of whom some 150 were to be found there at any one time. The average term of stay was probably about three months. Very few of those who went to the colony, therefore, remained sufficiently long to learn more than the roughest field work, and the only success that could be claimed for Leongatha was that it temporarily provided for men who otherwise would have hung about the cities, and in the end have become confirmed mendicants.

The principles of occupation of the Mallee lands introduced by the Act of 1883 were so far successful that the number of occupiers increased in ten years from 58 to 2325, and the area occupied from 7,727,360 acres to 9,310,800 acres, and good work was done in improving the carrying capacity of the country. In 1896 another Act was passed considerably modifying the previous legislation affecting these lands, chiefly in the direction of making them more generally accessible, especially in view of the fact that much of the Mallee country was proved to be excellently adapted to the cultivation of wheat. The provisions of the Act of 1896, with some slight changes, were embodied as Part II. of the comprehensive Act of 1898. In the new legislation the distinction of Mallee country and Mallee border was maintained, and for purposes of occupation the lands were classed as "blocks," "allotments," and "agricultural allotments," the two former being lands occupied or available for purely grazing purposes, and the latter for selection under licence and lease, with the right of conversion into freehold, or occupation under perpetual lease.

The Mallee country comprises about 7,750,000 acres in the north-western corner of the colony touching the South Australian border and the Murray River, and the "border"

3,500,000 acres on the southern and eastern fringes of the Mallee country. The "country" was divided into blocks of various sizes, and under the Act of 1896, as well as under the original Act, leases of these blocks could be granted for a term of years not extending beyond 1903; at the termination of the leases the lands, with their improvements, reverted to the Crown. The annual rent fixed by the Act of 1896 was at the rate of not less than 2s. 6d. per square mile. To these leases were attached conditions similar to those granted under the Act of 1883. The lessee was required, within three years of the commencement of his lease, to destroy all vermin, native dogs, rabbits, etc., upon the whole block, and maintain all improvements. The pastoral subdivisions of the Mallee border were called allotments; these were not to exceed 20,000 acres in extent, and were to be made available for lease on the same terms as the Mallee blocks, but at higher rentals, viz. from 10s. to £2 : 13 : 4 per square mile.

A Board was appointed to classify all agricultural land in the Mallee, whether in the country or in the border, and any person of eighteen years or upwards was given the right of selecting 640 acres of first-class, 1000 acres of second-class, 1280 acres of third-class, or 1600 acres of fourth-class land as an agricultural allotment, under residential or non-residential licence or perpetual lease. To holders of Mallee allotments was also given the right to select similar areas out of their allotments and on like conditions; such right was, however, to lapse if not exercised before 30th November 1903. For first-class land the purchase-money in full for a residential licence was fixed at £1 per acre, and the licence was to run for a term of six years at a rent of 1s. per acre. The personal residence of the selector was necessary during five years of the licence period, and improvements to the value of £1 per acre were required to be on the land at the expiration of the licence. These conditions being complied with, the licensee became entitled to a lease of the land for fourteen years at the same rental or a Crown grant at any

time by paying the difference between what had been paid in rent and £1 per acre. If the licensee desired, the rent of his holding might be reduced to 6d. per acre, in which case, while the period of licence remained six years, the term of the lease was extended to thirty-four years. For second-class land the purchase price in full was fixed at 10s. per acre and the licence for a term of six years at a yearly rent of 6d. per acre, followed by a lease for fourteen years at the same rent. As in the case of first-class land the licensee was allowed the option of reducing the rent by half, paying 3d. per acre instead of 6d., the period of licence remaining six years, but the period of lease being extended to thirty-four years. The improvements at the end of the licence period were to be of the value of 10s. per acre.

Persons desirous of acquiring Mallee allotments without performing the condition of residence required of ordinary selectors were permitted to do so without paying any more for their land, but they were required to construct yearly, for six years, improvements to the value of 6s. 8d. per acre where their land was rated as first-class, and 3s. 4d. per acre when second-class.

The principle of perpetual lease was much favoured after the visit of Henry George to Melbourne in 1890, and found many advocates in the press, but not, it must be owned, amongst would-be selectors. Under the Act of 1896 authority was given for the granting of perpetual leases of Mallee lands in areas not exceeding 1920 acres. The initial rental was not to exceed 2d. an acre until the close of the year 1903; thereafter the rents were to be fixed by the Classification Board on the basis of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent on the estimated unimproved value. The lessee was required to destroy all the vermin on his land within two years, and keep his land vermin-free during his tenancy. Residence was the only other condition demanded of a lessee. During the first year after acquiring his lease he was required to reside on or within a distance of 5 miles of his land, and thereafter for a period of eight months in

each year ; but he could free himself of this obligation by cultivating one-fourth of his land within two years and at least one-half within four years.

The Mallee legislation may be fairly said to have attained its object. At the close of the century nearly 700,000 acres, chiefly in the counties of Karkarook and Tatchera, were under cultivation, which was four to five times the area of 1893. It was unfortunate that the enterprise of the settlers was not matched by the generosity of the seasons, yet in spite of this the land remained permanently added to the cultivated area of the colony.

Victoria was the first of the Australian colonies to feel the effects of the wasteful alienation of the public estate, in a dearth of land for agricultural settlement. The aggregation of land in large estates was an evil early recognized, and the Land Tax of 1877 was imposed with the idea that owners might cut up their estates in order to escape taxation. This mild legislation had no practical effect, and in 1898 the principle of resumption of land for settlement purposes was introduced. The authority administering the Act was empowered to arrange for the purchase of blocks of good agricultural land in any farming district, the completion of the purchase being subject to the approval of Parliament. The blocks so acquired were to be subdivided and offered for sale at a price sufficient to cover their original purchase cost and other charges incidental to their subdivision. The form of sale was termed conditional purchase-lease. The conditions to be fulfilled were : improvements to the value of 10s. per acre or 10 per cent of the purchase price, at the discretion of the Board, to be effected within three years, and improvements to an equal value before the end of the sixth year ; personal residence by the purchaser, his wife, or any child not less than eighteen years of age for eight months of each of the first six years, during which period the land was not to be assigned, transferred, mortgaged, or sublet ; and certain covenants were to be entered into relating to mining, cultivation, vermin destruction, and other matters. The

nominal term of the lease was thirty-one and a half years or such less period as should be agreed upon, and the purchase-money was payable half-yearly with interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum, but after the expiration of six years, provided all the conditions had been complied with, the purchaser was given the right to pay the balance of the purchase-money, and thus acquire the fee-simple of his land. Little use was made of this legislation, which was superseded by a Compulsory Sales Act a few years later.

QUEENSLAND

The financial disasters of 1893, accompanied as they were by a sudden increase of unemployment, induced the Parliament of Queensland to pass the Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Act. In a sense the new legislation was a development of the village settlement provisions of the Acts of 1886 and 1889, but it was also a direct reply to the New Australia movement and an invitation to those who desired to form a settlement on Socialist lines to try their experiment in Queensland and not in Paraguay. The Act contemplated that associations should be formed by groups of thirty or more adults, who should draw up a definite constitution to govern their working. To each such group approved by the Minister for Lands would be assigned for its exclusive occupation as much land as it could put to beneficial use, not exceeding in the aggregate more than 160 acres for each member. The land was given to the group on lease for a term of not less than six or more than twelve years, as determined by the Minister, and during the period for which the lease was granted improvements to the value of 10s. per acre were to be carried out by the association. On the expiration of the lease, if one-half the members of the group had been in actual residence on the land and improvements to the required value had been effected, the association would be given a perpetual lease, or, if the rules of the association permitted, which they sometimes did

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not, the freehold might be acquired on payment of the price, if any, placed upon the land by the Minister when the original lease was granted. As the basis of an association was communistic, no member had or could claim an individual interest or property in the improvements on the land, even where such improvements had been effected by his sole efforts; but if the freehold were acquired, the association was at liberty to divide the land among its members.

The Queensland Labour Party prided itself on having originated the idea embodied in the Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Act; nevertheless, the Act was passed with the goodwill of all parties, and the Government especially was very desirous of giving the experiment a fair trial. Persons interested in forming co-operative groups considered that the initial difficulties of settlement would be the most formidable; these being surmounted, all would be plain sailing. In order, therefore, to ease the first operations, and also to enable persons without means, but otherwise acceptable, to join the associations, the Government obtained authority to advance money, tools, food, and the like to the amount of £20 per member, such advance to be gradually repaid when the community became self-supporting. So eager were the authorities to bring the Act into operation, that on 20th October 1893, within a week of the Governor's assent being given, the regulations for the establishment of the co-operative groups were gazetted, and an office opened in Brisbane. Between that date and Christmas 1893, twelve groups, comprising 591 men, chiefly from Brisbane, with 1400 women and children dependents, were recognized by the Minister and facilities granted for their settlement in accordance with the Act and their own rules.

When the question of locating the settlements arose, the Government demurred to accepting any responsibility, and the selection of the sites for the occupation of the communities was in every instance undertaken by the communities themselves. The blocks selected generally gave an area of 160 acres per man, but in one instance it

was only 97 acres, no larger area being available. It happened, unfortunately for the success of the first year's operations, that there was a delay in the first-formed groups entering into possession of their land; when they did get to work it was too late for them to obtain cereal crops, and only one group, the Mizpah, obtained any crop except vegetables during the season 1893-94.

The Government money grants, which varied from £15 to £17 : 4 : 3 per man, were soon used up, and before the end of 1894 applications for further assistance came in from nearly all the groups. These the Government thought it necessary to comply with, in order to save the communities from immediate disruption. Before June 1895 these additional grants were also exhausted, and the settlers as a whole were in great distress. The location of the settlements was in some instances unsatisfactory, the co-operators had to contend with bad soil and lack of water, and at all the settlements there were difficulties arising from the demand for common work. More destructive to the movement were the personal differences which soon arose, out of which came endless squalid disputes and serious secessions, so that in twenty months several of the groups had suffered the loss of half the members. In November 1895, three groups, the New Desperandum, the Overtown, and the Excel Pioneers, all in the Roma district, were reduced to such straits that the Government considered it necessary to remove the remaining settlers, diminished to 32 men, 32 women, and 10 children, to Brisbane, where they were provided with shelter and food until the men were able to find work. In no instance was a group permanently successful. Some broke down almost at the beginning; others struggled on working hard to make their land pay, but in the end failure came upon them also.

Taken as a whole, the men who tried the experiment of these co-operative communities were of good physical type, who, under other conditions, would have become admirable settlers. Some of them, in spite of the break-

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down of the co-operative system and the general abandonment of the settlements, refused to give up their work. These men the Government was well pleased to accept as ordinary selectors and allow to retain their allotments.

The cost of the experiment to the Treasury was something less than £14,000, and the Government deemed the money to have been well spent. During the difficult period of 1893 and 1894, when an unemployed agitation would have been awkward for the Government, the men who, had they remained in Brisbane, would have been the leaders and mainstay of such agitation, were secured elsewhere and engaged on an experiment, the manifest failure of which would render harmless any further agitation for "Socialism in our time" by the advanced wing of the Labour Party. The spokesmen of that party were disposed to say that the experiment was doomed to failure from the first, as the selected sites were not suitable for agricultural settlement; but apart from the fact that this was true only of some of the sites, the news of certain quaint happenings in Paraguay made it clear that much the same ending might have resulted had all the settlements been well chosen and the land of abounding fertility.

To the Co-operative Communities Land Settlement Act were added provisions for the establishment of labour colonies. It was intended that three or four colonies should be set up in different districts, each colony to be governed by a body of trustees appointed in the first instance by the Government. An area of about 10,000 acres would comprise the domain of the trustees; it was expected that subscriptions would be obtained from the philanthropic public in considerable amounts, and the Government proposed to give £1000 a year to each colony, or double the amount of any subscriptions obtained from the public.

Only one labour colony was formed, and this accomplished very little. The trustees had mainly in view the fitting of unemployed town workers for rural labour, but the claim of any able-bodied unemployed for admission

was conceded, and any person admitted was entitled to board and shelter on his compliance with the rules of labour laid down for inmates of the colony. The idea of the Labour Party was that every man in the community had the right to be found work, and where it was impossible for him to be given work at his ordinary calling, he should be able to apply to the State for work and maintenance until conditions admitted of his obtaining work in the ordinary way. The Government was actuated by very different motives. It was concerned to keep unemployment from becoming aggressive, and if men who were out of work could be induced or forced to enter a labour colony, the danger of unemployed agitation becoming formidable was so much diminished. Besides this, there was always the possibility of a person who remained for some little time in a labour settlement qualifying for farm labour, and thus becoming a more useful member of the community.

As in the other parts of Australia the ordinary worker avoided the labour settlement, entrance into which he considered more or less as a degradation, and the majority of those who went to the colony were persons directed there by the police, chronic unemployed and the class of casuals found everywhere in Australia, averse from hard or steady labour, but willing to do light work in return for the shelter and ample food supplied on a labour settlement.

The area of Queensland is approximately 428,000,000 acres, and in 1893 about 15,000,000 acres had been sold ; of the remaining area 280,000,000 acres were leased, and allowing for reserves, goldfields and towns, there were probably 80,000,000 acres available for selection. Most of this remainder was unsuitable for ordinary settlement, but included in it was a large area of rich coastal land, the resumed areas in the settled districts and other land of excellent quality. Although selection was still going on, there was evidently a growing indisposition to take up land, however good, which was remote from or without easy access to an important market, and the Government was being pressed to make available land in the settled

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districts, contingent to the railways, in blocks sufficiently large to give selectors a living area. This was considered by competent authorities to be from 100 to 160 acres, if the land were good and well watered. The Government was anxious to meet this new demand, which it recognized as reasonable and possibly in the best interests of the colony. Inquiry showed, however, that the bulk of the land suitable for close settlement had already been alienated and was in the occupation of graziers, and the Government decided to ask Parliament to put it in the position to buy back from the owners, by compulsion if necessary, land held in large blocks, which was specially suitable for agriculture and only used for grazing purposes. Hence the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1894. The Act did not specifically mention the districts wherein land was to be acquired, but it was passed mainly with the object of regaining possession of the Darling Downs, where much land suitable for agriculture had been sold to the squatters in the early days of settlement. Parliament made no great difficulty in giving the Government the powers asked for, and in August 1895, 23,000 acres of land on the Downs were acquired and made available for purchase in small blocks. The land was offered at auction on a system of deferred payments, but, to the surprise of almost every one, there was no eagerness displayed by purchasers, and in April 1896 less than half the area offered had been sold.

The times, however, were difficult, and it was a general experience that capital even in small amounts was hard to obtain for any enterprise, no matter how promising; in the course of time all the land originally bought was disposed of. The Government persevered in its policy of closer settlement, and by the middle of 1898 about 140,000 acres on the Darling Downs had passed from the hands of large owners into agricultural occupation. The settlers who thus bought land were as a rule of the best description, men accustomed to mixed farming, and with small but sufficient capital to work their holdings successfully. Private owners soon followed the course set by the Govern-

ment, and began to cut up their estates into small farms ; in this way 15,500 acres of Canning Downs passed into the hands of more than one hundred small settlers, and other large holdings were equally well disposed of.

In 1895 the question of the continued occupation of land in settled districts for pastoral purposes was once more the subject of discussion. The area so occupied amounted to about 8,200,000 acres, including 3,500,000 acres which had been resumed from the squatters but not selected. For this area the Government was obtaining the very inadequate rental of £20,000 a year. The resumed area had been open for selection for some nine or ten years and had been scarcely touched, so the Government thought it safe to proceed on the assumption that none of the land was wanted by settlers, and it determined to renew the leases about to fall in, for a definite term, exacting an increased rental in return for this concession. A Bill was accordingly introduced in November 1895, to authorize the Land Board to notify in the *Gazette* that a run in the settled districts was not required for settlement, and if no objection were offered within a month, the lessee could apply for and might be granted a ten-year tenancy of his holding. The proposal aroused considerable opposition, chiefly on the ground of the block to settlement that might follow the locking up of land for mere grazing for so long a period, and the Bill was not proceeded with ; in its place a short Act was passed giving tenants the right to continue in occupation of their runs at the existing rentals, but without any renewal of lease, so that they could be displaced by settlers at any time should the land be required.

The grazing selections taken up under the Act of 1884 had been as a rule very successful, and amply justified the policy which created them. The maximum area of 20,000 acres was not beyond the capacity of an energetic man to manage and control, and as the selectors had usually sufficient capital to work their land, these selections were well improved by subdivision into paddocks, and by the

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construction of dams and tanks for the storage of water. Their natural capacity was therefore improved, and the grazing selectors did not suffer very severely from the recurrent droughts, in strong contrast with the runs which they superseded.

Grazing conditions in other parts of the colony were much less satisfactory. The pastoralists had suffered so much in their disputes with the shearers and from the low price of wool, that outside the settled districts the question of the increase of pastoral rents, which was almost due for consideration under the provisions of the Act of 1884, was vigorously debated, the majority of run-holders maintaining that their runs could not bear any additional rent. The Government was so far sympathetic with the pastoralists as to decide that the case of each run-holder should be reviewed on its merits, and in the Land Act of 1895 provision was made for leaving the terms of the renewal of leases, where land was not required for settlement, to the discretion of the Land Board.

The pastoral industry passed through a most extraordinary phase during this period. There had been a very rapid increase in the cattle of the colony between 1886 and 1894, and in the year last mentioned more than 7,000,000 large stock were depastured. During the next three years there was a decline, but the total was still above 6,000,000 ; in 1899 it had dropped to 5,000,000 and went on declining year by year, reaching its lowest point in 1903, when the number of cattle in the colony was only 2,481,000. The loss of sheep was equally remarkable. From 9,000,000 in 1885 the flocks of the colony increased to 21,700,000 in 1892 ; there was a very great decrease in the following year owing to drought, and then a partial recovery, and in 1896 the total was still not far short of 20,000,000. But from 1896 onward there was a continuous and rapid decline, so that in 1902 the number had sunk to 7,213,000, barely one-third of the total of ten years previously. This decline in the flocks and herds was due to an almost continuous succession of unfavourable seasons, against

which the colony, in its then condition of development, was unable successfully to contend.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The position in which the South Australian Government found itself in regard to the pastoral leases in 1893 was made more difficult by the low price of live-stock, wool, and other products. It was evident that the banks and mortgage companies would not, in the prevailing financial uncertainty, lend much aid to pastoral lessees, and the Government had to abandon all thought of obtaining from incoming lessees any of the money which it had paid to the outgoers. In framing its new Land Bill the Government had in view two things: that it should add no further to its obligations in respect of compensation for improvements, and that every inducement should be given to pastoralists to retain and improve their holdings. The strict geographical classification of the runs was abandoned, and the Act of 1893 divided the pastoral lands of the Province into three classes, according to their situation and other circumstances. In Classes A and B, leases were to be for twenty years, and it was provided that no portion of the land included in a lease should be resumed during the first ten years, nor subsequently unless two years' notice of the intention to resume was given. The full value of the improvements made on the resumed land was to be paid, as well as compensation for the loss of the lease. These provisions gave the leaseholder practical security of tenure. The difficulty as to compensation for improvements was got over by a provision that such were to be assessed in regard to their value to the incoming lessee, and were to be paid for by him. Leases of lands in Class C were to be for twenty-one years, with a right of renewal for a like period.

The practice of allowing rents to be determined by auction had proved unsatisfactory, chiefly on account of the irregularities which arose in regard to lands of equal

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grazing value. Under the new system the Pastoral Board fixed the rent at a minimum of 2s. 6d. per square mile, with 2d. per head for each sheep depastured on lands coming under Classes A and B, and 1d. per head for each sheep on lands in Class C. On the renewal of a lease in Class C, the rent charged was not to be increased by more than one-half. Lands held under other Acts, except lands in Class 1 under the Act of 1888, might be surrendered for leases under the new Act.

The Act of 1893 proved as powerless as any of its predecessors to effect a beneficial change in the pastoral industry. During 1894, 1895, and 1896 the country suffered from drought and prices were very low. Many leases were abandoned, and the rents of many others were not paid. In November 1896 it was estimated that over 30,000 square miles of pastoral land, held under lease in 1888, had been abandoned, of which 21,300 square miles remained untenanted; this area represented one-fourth of the pasture lands of the Province. This or a somewhat similar condition had prevailed for some time. The greater part of the abandoned land was in the outer districts, but even the best lands were affected. Pastoralists who had offered high rents for lands in Class 1 at the auctions of 1888 now found themselves in many cases unable to pay them, and their difficulties were recognized by Parliament, which, in 1895, passed an Act empowering the Commissioner of Lands to reduce the rents of these lands. Very considerable reductions were made almost immediately. In the following year another Act was passed, allowing the lessees of Class 1 country, who had no compensation rights under the Act of 1888, except for water improvements, to surrender their leases and, subject to the recommendation of the Surveyor-General, to receive fresh leases at rentals fixed by the Pastoral Board under the Act of 1893. The advantages of surrender were so considerable that, within a few months, the lessees of 14,618 square miles of this class of country applied to be allowed to surrender, and the holders of

9387 square miles were permitted to do so. All the new rents showed reductions; the average reduction for the whole surrendered area was one-third. In 1899 still another Act was passed dealing with pastoral leases. Under this Act the classification of pastoral lands enforced by previous Acts was abolished in regard to all new leases; these were to be for forty-two years at a rent fixed by the Pastoral Board at their commencement, but subject to review at the expiration of twenty-one years. In fixing the rent the Board was to be guided by a consideration of the carrying capacity of the land, its value for agricultural or other purposes, and its proximity and facilities of approach to railway stations, ports, rivers, and markets. The Act was passed at a time when there was no demand for pastoral lands, and very few leases were taken up under its provisions before the close of the period.

The anxiety of Parliament to improve the conditions of the pastoral industry is evident from the numerous and liberal concessions granted by it after the financial troubles of 1893. These concessions, while they may have helped the individual pastoralist, were unable to revive the industry; indeed there was a persistent decline in the flocks and herds of the Province throughout the whole period, the number of sheep falling from 7,267,642 in 1893 to 5,235,220 in 1900, and of cattle from 423,602 to 214,761. Much land had gone out of occupation, especially in 1897 and 1898, and the official returns show that 40,000 square miles of pastoral lands, with improvements, for which the Government had paid £186,197, lay tenantless.

To a large extent the unsatisfactory position of the pastoral industry was due to chronic deficiency of rainfall, but it was greatly aggravated by the necessity imposed on new lessees of finding money to pay for improvements—money which neither the banks nor the other financial institutions were any longer willing to advance.

At the close of the period, 98,184 square miles of land beyond the limits of agricultural settlement were under

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pastoral occupation in South Australia proper, and from this the country obtained the insignificant rental of £43,766. The area sold or in process of sale both within and without those limits was approximately 20,000 square miles, so that 262,000 square miles were neither sold nor leased, and very little of this large area was put to any use.

The depressing effects of the commercial disasters of 1893 lingered longer in South Australia than in any of the other colonies. The low prices which prevailed seriously affected its rural industries, and the tightness of the money market prevented the farmers so equipping themselves as to make cultivation profitable at the lower range of prices. The Government hastened to change the land laws, so that hard-pressed farmers might be relieved of some of their burdens. The Land Act of 1893 created a central Land Board mainly for the purpose of expediting and coordinating the work of the various District Boards. To the District Boards was given the power to recommend the reduction or remission of the rents of leases for grazing or cultivation, selectors' and other leases; lessees other than of pastoral holdings were allowed to surrender their leases, and have substituted for them perpetual leases not subject to periodical revaluation. These concessions gave real relief to struggling farmers, and in the same Act the Government embodied provisions for the creation of village settlements, which, it was expected, would bring relief to the unemployed of the cities. The Act provided that twenty or more adult persons might form an association for the purpose of founding a village settlement, which was to be governed by definite rules approved by the Commissioner of Lands and registered in the ordinary way. Then would follow a proclamation setting forth the name and situation of the village, the names of the villagers and of the trustees, the maximum area to be allotted for each villager, the nature of the improvements to be made on the land, and the period within which they were to be effected. Within two

months of the proclamation the Commissioner of Lands was empowered to issue to the association a perpetual lease of the land of the village. At least one-half of the villagers were required to reside on the land, and during the first ten years improvements of a minimum value of 2s. per acre were to be effected. The Commissioner was authorized to make advances to the extent of £100 to each villager for the purchase of tools or in order that improvements might be made, the money to be repaid in ten equal yearly instalments with the addition of interest at 5 per cent.

The extent to which the provisions relating to village settlements were made use of and the results will be described in the next chapter. There was hardly a regulation of the Act that was strictly observed. Thirteen associations were formed, nearly all of them during the year 1894, but afterwards the Act became practically a dead letter, and the associations gradually ceased to exist as "village settlements," although in some cases the villagers remained in occupation of the land, which was subdivided among them as lessees in the ordinary way.

The financial difficulties of 1893 were also responsible for the State Advances Act of 1895, which authorized the Government to make advances to farmers on the security of their holdings, the requisite funds for the purpose being obtained by the issue of State Mortgage Bonds. In the same year an Act was passed giving authority to the Commissioner of Lands to reduce the rent or purchase-money of lands allotted by the Land Boards; in 1898 a further Act extended this concession and authorized persons who had obtained leases with the right of purchase to surrender their agreements in exchange for perpetual leases. These concessions were accepted with avidity. Many of the non-pastoral lessees were heavily in arrear with their payments, and, during 1899, 1168 applied to surrender their leases and 3322 asked for a reduction in rent. The reductions which were then conceded, added to those made under the Act of 1895, amounted

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to £33,500 per annum, and as the Act was retrospective, accumulated arrears to the extent of about £100,000 were wiped out. But even these drastic reductions left many of the lessees heavily in debt to the Crown. This lamentable condition of the small farmers was largely attributable to the drought of 1894 to 1897. In some of these years many farmers did not reap wheat enough to provide for the next year's sowing ; in 1896 only 2,800,000 bushels were obtained from 1,693,000 acres sown, and Parliament voted £55,000 for the purpose of supplying seed-wheat. The seasons 1898, 1899, and 1900 were fairly good as the term is used in South Australia, but the average yield of wheat per acre was only 5·2 bushels, and there was no indication that the great liberalization of the Land Laws, which had been going on for thirty years, had been accompanied by better methods of farming, or that the bulk of the soil was of such a character as would repay more intensive methods of culture. At the census of 1901, taken just after the close of this period, it was ascertained that 34,186 persons were engaged in farming pursuits in South Australia, and the cultivated area was 2,370,000 acres ; this gives an average of about 70 acres per person, which was much more than twice the average in Victoria or New South Wales, and nearly three times that of New Zealand. This sort of cultivation gave to the farmer in South Australia better results than in the other colonies, provided the seasons were good, but when they were poor or inferior the results were disastrous.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The regulations of 1887 remained in force until 1898. They proved elastic enough to allow for the great changes in the circumstances of the colony, arising out of the gold discoveries, and such alterations in the law as were made arose from a desire to assist the town unemployed and others without means to settle on the land, and to encourage settlers of all classes to improve their holdings.

During 1893 a Homestead Act was passed providing for the granting of free homestead farms and for the sale of homestead leases on very liberal terms. The Act empowered the Governor to set apart certain areas within forty miles of a railway, out of which homesteads not exceeding 160 acres might be selected in alternate blocks without payment, the privilege of acquiring these blocks being given to males of at least eighteen years of age and women who were the sole heads of families. There was a further restriction that blocks would not be given to any one already holding above 100 acres either in fee-simple or under a special occupation lease. Persons authorized to select a homestead were required to reside upon their land for six months of every twelve during the first five years, and to expend £30, during two years, in erecting a house, or in clearing and cropping. The planting of 2 acres of orchard or vineyard was to be taken as the equivalent of this expenditure. The grantees were also required to fence one-fourth of their land and put under crop one-eighth of it within five years, and to fence the whole and put under crop one-fourth within seven years. If these conditions were fulfilled a Crown grant would be issued. The Act also provided that village sites might be set apart within five miles of the land destined for homestead farms, and a homestead selector was given the right to an allotment of an acre in such a village, whereon he might reside instead of upon his farm, the Crown grant for the allotment being issued with that for the homestead. A Homestead Bill had been introduced in the previous year, which proposed to authorize loans being made to settlers for the improvement of their land, but the opposition to this was so strong that the Bill had to be abandoned, and the Act, as passed, contained no such provision.

The areas set apart for homestead leases, like those for homesteads, were to be within forty miles of a railway, but the land was generally what would be described as second or third class, that reserved for homesteads being of better quality from the point of agriculture or mixed

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farming. Where land was considered as second class, areas of from 1000 to 3000 acres might be selected for leasing, at a yearly rental of 2d. an acre for fifteen years and 3d. an acre for the subsequent period ; for third-class lands the leased area ranged from 1000 to 5000 acres, and the rental was 1d. an acre for the first fifteen years and 2d. an acre for the remainder of the term, the full term of lease in both classes being thirty years. The conditions on which a lease could be obtained and held were : the payment of the cost of survey, which was distributed over five years ; residence by the lessee or his agent for nine out of every twelve months of the first five years ; the fencing of half the area of the lease within two years and of the whole area within four years ; the making of certain prescribed improvements, which would add to the permanent value of the land, such improvements to be to the value of 8d. an acre yearly from the sixth to the fifteenth year of occupation in the case of second-class land, and of 5d. an acre on third-class land. On compliance with these conditions the lessee was entitled at the end of thirty years to a Crown grant, but he could obtain the grant earlier if, in addition to the cost of the fence, he spent upon the land a sum equal to the aggregate rent for twenty-five years, and also paid the difference between the aggregate of the rents he had already paid and the value of the land, calculated at 6s. 3d. per acre for second-class and 3s. 9d. per acre for third-class land.

The framers of this very liberal law had confidently expected that it would be a great and immediate success. In this they were disappointed. The applications for homesteads during the first year were very few, while not one homestead lease was taken up. It was obvious that men of enterprise were able to find on the goldfields more immediately lucrative occupation, and the unemployed of the towns, who were in special view when the measure was before Parliament, would naturally be unable to maintain themselves on a homestead while awaiting its development to a productive stage.

LAND LEGISLATION AND SETTLEMENT 2003

The great increase of population, especially after 1894, gave a stimulus to general settlement and the Government found itself with a largely increased land revenue. Much of this revenue was derived from the sale of town lots on the goldfields ; quarter-acre blocks at Coolgardie averaged £182 each, at Kanowna £174, and at Kurnalpi from £40 to £140 ; later on these prices were greatly exceeded.

With the object of helping persons with little capital to settle on the land and improve their holdings, the Forrest Government established what for want of a better name was called an Agricultural Bank. The original capital of the bank was £100,000, raised by the sale of mortgage bonds, and any farmer or settler could obtain an advance on the security of his holding, whether he held his land in fee-simple, under special occupation lease, on conditional purchase, or as a homestead farm. The advances were required to be used in making improvements and were not to exceed one-half the value of such improvements, or a total of £400. Interest was charged at 5 per cent and the loan was to be repaid by half-yearly instalments within a period of thirty years. As security the bank accepted a first mortgage upon land held in fee-simple ; in other cases a transfer of the lease or other title was required, and the money was advanced by instalments, as improvements were made. A little experience showed that the bank had every prospect of success. Its usefulness was extended by raising the maximum advance to three-quarters of the value of the improvements or a total of £800, and in 1899 the bank's capital was increased to £200,000.

In 1898 an Act was passed to consolidate and amend the laws in force relating to the sale and occupation of land, as these had become numerous and confusing. The new Act embodied the principles found in previous legislation with some extensions. The sale of town and suburban land by auction was maintained and that of country land at fixed prices with conditions of cultivation attached. Agricultural areas open to free selection were to be set apart in all divisions of the colony, and free

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selection was also allowed outside these areas, upon land in the eastern and Eucla divisions within forty miles of a railway, as well as in the south-western division as permitted by previous legislation. The maximum area that might be acquired for gardens was increased from 20 to 50 acres, and these blocks could be acquired in any part of the colony, instead of, as formerly, in the south-western division only.

The provisions of the Homestead Act of 1893 were adopted practically without change, and there was an important extension of the principle in the provisions for miners' homestead leases and working men's blocks.

Part of a goldfield's area was to be set apart for miners' homesteads, and any miner resident on the field was permitted to select 20 acres of land within two miles of the nearest boundary of any town site or suburban area, or 500 acres beyond that limit. As soon as his application was approved and notified in the *Gazette*, he was required to enter upon the land, and if, on the expiration of six months, it was found that he had not lived on it or used it in certain specified ways, his right to occupy it was withdrawn. Within three years from the date of the survey of the land, the lessee was required to fence it, and within five years to expend in prescribed improvements an amount equal to 10s. per acre. Rent was charged at the rate of 2s. a year per acre on blocks up to 20 acres; for larger blocks 6d. an acre was charged for twenty years and 1s. thereafter.

To any person not already a landholder, and either the head of a family or a male person of at least eighteen years of age, was given the right to acquire a working man's block. These blocks were part of areas specially set apart, their size being limited to a maximum of half an acre on the goldfields and 5 acres elsewhere. The price of the land was fixed by the Lands Department, but in no case was it less than £1 an acre, and this was payable in twenty equal half-yearly instalments. On an application for one of these blocks being approved, the block-holder was given

a lease for ten years, and certain conditions were required to be fulfilled. He was required to enter into possession within three months, and occupy his block either personally or through some member of his family during at least nine months in each of the first five years of his lease; within three years the whole of the land was required to be fenced, and within five years an amount equal to twice the purchase-money had to be expended on certain prescribed improvements. This last was in addition to the sum expended on the dwelling and exterior fencing.

The Act of 1898 made little change in the law regarding pastoral holdings. The maximum areas that might be taken up in the different divisions remained unchanged, but the term of all leases, whether they were fresh leases or renewals, was definitely fixed to expire in December 1928. There was little change in the rents chargeable; what alterations were made were in the direction of a reduction for the concluding periods of the leases.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the land legislation of Western Australia, which was already framed on liberal lines, became even more liberal as the period advanced. Nor was there any departure from its original aims—of allowing the lands of the colony to be given over to the use of pastoralists on equitable terms, so long as they were not required for agriculture; of preventing the formation of large freehold estates; and of fostering agriculture and mixed farming. There were no striking innovations during the period, as the amendments in the law followed the lines of successful legislation in the eastern colonies, and in this way Western Australia was saved from some of the difficulties which had arisen in other parts of Australia.

Liberal as was the land legislation before 1894, the small population and its wide distribution made rapid progress impossible in agriculture, but what liberal laws had not been able to accomplish was speedily effected by the excellent market provided by the gold discoveries. In 1894 the area of land under wheat was 21,433 acres; in 1898 it had leapt up to 75,031 acres. The increase in the

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area devoted to hay was even more rapid. In 1894 that area did not quite reach 50,000 acres ; in 1900 it exceeded 104,000 acres. Oats, barley, potatoes, in fact all the common crops, showed large increases also, and, great as was the progress of population, the progress of agriculture was still greater.

The colony had been affected by a drought at the close of the previous period, extending with more or less severity over the three years 1891-93. This had a very adverse effect on the pastoral industry. The number of stock depastured in the colony was not large, but so much of the land was in its primitive condition, with little or no provision for storing water, that when a drought came the pastoralists suffered severely, especially as there was almost an entire absence of facilities for saving stock by removing them from one district to another, where better conditions existed. In 1890 the tally of sheep in the colony was 2,525,000 ; the drought reduced this in two years to 1,685,000, and in 1900 the number was only 2,432,000, notwithstanding that the intervening seasons were, on the whole, rather favourable.

TASMANIA

The year 1893 was marked by severe depression in all Tasmanian industries, except mining ; there was a large loss of population, and a further loss was seriously feared. The emigrants were, as a rule, men in the prime of life, and to avoid further losses of the same class, an Act was passed permitting any person who had attained the age of eighteen years, who had not previously purchased land from the Crown, to select one lot of country land from 15 to 50 acres in extent, at 26s. 8d. per acre. No deposit was demanded, nor was any part of the purchase price required until three years had expired, when one-fifteenth would be payable annually until the whole had been paid. Besides the due payment of the purchase-money, the selector was required to reside habitually on the land, and

make substantial improvements, other than buildings, to the value of £1 an acre.

The loss of population was indeed checked during 1894 and 1895, and stopped altogether in 1896, but it can hardly be said that the Act of 1893 contributed anything to this result. Its offer of three years' occupation of a small block of land in an unimproved condition, coupled with the obligation of eighteen years' habitual residence before a title could be acquired, did not prove attractive. But it was not only the landless that the colony was in danger of losing; there was a probability that many selectors would abandon their holdings. During 1894 and 1895 the depression still weighed heavily on the agricultural and pastoral industries; the land sales fell off, not more than 14,585 acres were sold in 1895, and much land in pastoral occupation reverted to the Crown. Selectors and others who had bought on credit were largely in arrear with their annual payments, and to meet the difficulties of the times an Act was passed in 1894 authorizing selectors to postpone their payments. Such postponement might be for five years, interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum being charged on the overdue instalments. The same Act permitted selectors who had paid half the purchase-money to obtain a grant of a portion of their holdings equivalent to the amount paid by them. The Act was assented to in August 1894, and many selectors at once took advantage of it to postpone their instalments; at the same time the Lands Minister directed the forfeiture of about 56,000 acres, upon which large arrears had accumulated. Little advantage was or could be taken of the concession to apply payments already made to the purchase of a portion of a holding, as very few of the selectors had paid as much as one-half their purchase-money, and in 1895 this provision was extended to any selector regardless of the proportion of the purchase-money which he had paid, but only selectors who had fulfilled the conditions of residence and improvements were allowed to benefit by these lenient provisions. This last-mentioned amending

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Act came into force in October 1895 and expired in the following June, but as selectors continued to get behind-hand with their payments its duration was repeatedly extended.

The Act of 1893 had provided for the establishment of village settlements, and some land was taken up for the purpose of such a settlement at Southport on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. The history of this enterprise belongs to another place. It will suffice here to say that as a co-operative enterprise it was a failure; five years later the land was parcelled out among private owners, and no other attempt to form a settlement was made.

The summer of 1897-98 was marked by an unusual and prolonged drought accompanied by very serious bush fires, and the Government felt itself obliged to go to the assistance of the small settlers whose holdings had suffered. Many of these were provided with food and seed for the next sowing, and the payment of the instalments of the purchase-money due on their holdings was suspended for two years. This, however, did not affect the general progress of the country, which was very marked after 1896. There was a noticeable increase in the area under crop, and the orchardists began at last to reap a reward for their enterprise, in the large and remunerative export trade which had sprung up with Great Britain; there was a satisfactory improvement in the numbers of stock depastured; the area under pastoral lease, which had fallen below 500,000 acres in 1894, rapidly increased, and in 1901 stood at 1,430,000 acres. The export of domestic produce reached the value of £2,557,000 in 1899, which was the highest point thereto touched in the history of the colony, and this was considerably exceeded in subsequent years. This great expansion of trade was due to the wonderful development of the mineral deposits of the country, especially of copper and silver, while the production of gold and tin was well sustained.

III

IMMIGRATION

IN 1892 Australia, for the first time in its history, began to lose population by emigration. There was a loss of population in the three following years and also in 1898, 1899, and 1900 ; in the other years of the period under review there were gains, slight it is true, but just sufficient to balance the loss of the years of emigration. The increase of population from the year preceding the crisis to the establishment of Federation amounted to 462,000, which is equivalent to an annual gain of 17 per thousand ; this was the smallest increment gained in any period from the foundation of the colonies, and considerably less than half that of the previous thirty years.

While the flow of population from abroad had ceased, there was a large shifting of population from one colony to another, and in the process Victoria lost 102,455 persons, South Australia 18,088, and New South Wales 4960 ; while Western Australia gained 107,604, Queensland 20,349, and Tasmania a few hundreds.

At the close of the preceding period Queensland and Western Australia were the only colonies which maintained a policy of assisted immigration. Victoria had practically ceased granting assistance to immigrants in 1873, South Australia in 1886, New South Wales in 1888, and Tasmania in 1891. The labour and industrial difficulties following the great crisis led Queensland to suspend all active assistance in 1893, and it was not until a few

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years later, when business had again become normal, that immigration was officially encouraged to the extent of allowing persons to whom nomination certificates had been given to make use of them. In 1897-98, 638 assisted immigrants arrived in Queensland; thenceforward there was a steady stream of domestics and agricultural labourers brought to the colony at the public expense, but their numbers were much fewer than before the crisis. The finances of the country as well as the conditions of employment made a more active policy undesirable, especially as the small grants voted by Parliament were strongly opposed by the Labour Party.

The bad times that had fallen upon the eastern colonies provided Western Australia with a large supply of efficient miners, and during the years 1893-1900 the colony gained from the east, chiefly from Victoria and South Australia, nearly 108,000 persons, most of whom settled on the gold-fields.

This large influx of population relieved Western Australia of the necessity of pursuing a vigorous immigration policy. The supply of all classes of labour, except domestics and farm labourers, was equal to the demand, and assistance to emigrate from Great Britain was confined to farm labourers, single women, and widows without children, nominated by persons in the colony. Assistance was not given to persons over 40 years of age, or to children under 12 without their parents, husbands without their wives, or wives without their husbands, unless the parent, wife, or husband was already in Western Australia. An unmarried woman with an illegitimate child was also excluded from the benefit of the scheme. The nomination required the approval of the Government of the colony, and the person nominated of the Agent-General in London. The emigrant was required to be sober, industrious, of good moral character, of sound mind, in good health, free from bodily defect or deformity, able to perform the duties of his special occupation; and he was required to show that he was going to the state to settle there, for

the purpose of working at that occupation. Having satisfied all requirements, the emigrant was granted £7 : 10s. towards the payment of his fare to the colony, the total cost of which varied between £15 and £21.

Such being the conditions under which assistance to emigrants was granted, it is not at all surprising that few offered themselves as candidates. Between 1893 and the end of the century, the yearly average of persons granted assistance was 135, the largest total in any year being 199 in 1894, and the lowest 49 in 1899. The majority of the immigrants were women. Some encouragement was given towards the end of this period to certain classes of persons in the eastern colonies to go to Western Australia, but an open propaganda was not indulged in, lest the susceptibilities of the Governments should be ruffled. The persons required from the east were domestics, small farmers, market-gardeners, and poultry-keepers. No information as to the number secured has been published, but it is improbable that it was large, as the persons sought for could do very well for themselves where they were.

In July 1893 the Government decided that the law relating to the immigration of Chinese should be brought into accord with that of the eastern colonies. An Act was passed accordingly, limiting the number of Chinese brought in by any ship to one for every 500 tons burthen. This Act did not apply to other Asiatic labour and some Malays and Afghans were brought to the colony under the Imported Labour Registry Act, which remained unrepealed. The Afghans performed the useful function of camel-drivers in the teams carrying goods from the railheads and stations to the goldfields; nevertheless their presence in the country was greatly resented, and there were frequent small disturbances between them and European labourers.

In 1897 the Imported Labour Registry Act was amended in the direction of greater stringency. No labourer could be imported under its provisions for employment south of

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the 27th parallel of latitude ; the employer was required to give an undertaking to repatriate the immigrant on the conclusion of his indentured service, unless he accepted a fresh contract for service with the consent of the magistrate. A money deposit was required to ensure the fulfilment of this undertaking, and as a further precaution the number of Asiatics of any kind that could be introduced in a ship was limited to one for every 500 tons, so that all other Asiatics were placed on the same footing as Chinese. As a result of this Act the supply of Asiatic labour was greatly diminished, and on the plea that it was difficult if not impossible to get white men to undertake arduous work in the hotter parts of the colony, an attempt was made in 1898 to repeal the provision limiting the number of Asiatic immigrants which a ship could bring in. The Legislative Council agreed to this alteration, but it was rejected by the Assembly, and a similar attempt in 1899 was likewise rejected.

At the end of 1897 an Immigration Restriction Act was passed which, without specifically objecting to Asiatic immigrants, placed in the hands of the Government a means of stopping Asiatic immigration at will. The Act provided that any immigrant might be required to read a passage in English fifty words long before he was admitted. Some discretion rested with the officials, but it was obvious that, as a rule, Asiatic labourers could not pass such a test. The Act also prohibited the entrance of criminals, idiots, and persons afflicted with certain diseases, and was thus a very important check upon undesirable and undesired immigration.

IV

LABOUR AND WAGES

THE banking crisis, as we have seen, was not a sudden crash but an agony, lasting in its acute stage about sixteen weeks (the interval between the failure of the first bank and that of the last), and the economic sickness which preceded it extended over several years. The first noticeable effect of the crisis was a great scarcity of employment. Wages fell precipitously, as also did rents. Credit became restricted ; all descriptions of speculative enterprise came to an end, and by reason of the lowering of wages and the decline in profits, the demand for most articles of domestic consumption lessened also. Persons engaged in the building trades were the first to feel the effects of the crisis, as there was nearly a complete cessation of works of construction. Almost simultaneously there was a great contraction in the various manufacturing industries, which, following on the continuous decline of the three or four years preceding the crisis, brought employment in these industries to its lowest point.

It was claimed by the Labour leaders that the effect of the crisis might have been greatly mitigated for the wage-earners, if the various Governments had at once launched out on a bold policy of public works. In support of this view it was urged that the public works expenditure of the various Governments should be used to steady the labour market, and that it was an economic blunder of the first magnitude to throw a large body of unskilled labour on a market already disorganized by the curtailment of

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capital expenditure by private employers. It is not a characteristic of the State Governments of Australia to reduce public works expenditure unless this is inevitable, and in the case before us the reduction of expenditure could hardly have been avoided. As late as 1890 the colonies could borrow in London on very good terms, but in that year the market took an unfavourable turn. This change had for its immediate cause a condition of things not of Australia's own creation, as the Baring failure and the Argentine crisis were primarily responsible for the disorganization of the London markets and the curtailment of Australian borrowing. The sudden stoppage of credit greatly embarrassed the various Governments and they had recourse to Treasury bills to enable them to adjust their finances to the altered conditions. Treasury bills could be issued only in limited amounts, and it was a matter of first necessity to provide for loans maturing and for certain public works already under construction. When the immediate requirements of these had been met there was little left for other public services. It was several years later before the credit of the colonies was re-established, and then the money procurable was not sufficient to enable the Governments to indulge in expenditure on the scale prevailing prior to 1890, even if they had been intent on so doing.

When the so-called vigorous policy of public works was entered on in the early 'seventies there was ample room for the useful expenditure of capital; but in the period that followed there was, as we have seen, more money brought in at times than could be absorbed usefully. This was notoriously the case from 1886 to 1890, when over £95,000,000 was introduced in almost equal shares by the Governments and private capitalists. The importation of so much money, added to what had come in during previous years, brought about a condition of over-capitalization, unwholesome speculation, and the wholesale withdrawal of men from productive pursuits, which at any time would have been harmful, but was especially injurious

when an increase in production was most necessary to counteract the very considerable fall in the prices of the staple articles of Australian production.

The colonies, however, were not all or equally affected in their progress by the developments above referred to. Western Australia was throughout the greater part of this period in a situation of comparative isolation, and remained unaffected by the financial troubles of the eastern colonies. Queensland, indeed, suffered acutely from the bank failures, and had had its land boom like its neighbours ; but the boom had expended itself several years before the crisis, and during 1887-93 very little capital was imported into the colony on private account. When, therefore, the immediate effects of the failures had been surmounted, the people took up the work of production at the point where it had been interrupted. There was, it is true, a considerable amount of money withdrawn from Queensland, but this was a continuation of a process which had begun in 1889 or 1890, and amounted to no more than the voluntary repayment of capital which the increase of production enabled the people of the colony to effect without injury to their own interests.

The important discoveries of gold at this time gave to Western Australia an opportunity of drawing from some of the other colonies a large proportion of their effectives ; but this attraction did not affect Queensland, which was not only in a position to retain its own population, but, after the crisis, steadily to gain population from its neighbours.

: The progress of Western Australia's production at this time may be traced in the export of its domestic produce. From 1880 to 1884 this export was about £485,000 annually ; from 1885 to 1889, the period when gold was first discovered, the export averaged £619,000, mounting swiftly up, so that in 1894 the value exceeded £1,000,000, in 1897, £3,000,000, and in 1901, £8,000,000. The progress of Queensland could not compare with this, yet it was sound and satisfactory. From 1880 to 1884, when large accessions of

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capital were being received, the colony exported annually about £4,000,000 of its own produce ; from 1885 to 1889, which saw the end of the importation of capital on private account, the exports just overpassed £6,000,000 annually ; from 1890 to 1894 the average nearly touched £9,000,000, and from 1895 to 1899, £10,000,000. Queensland had its houseful of troubles and the liquidation of the land boom on its hands, but it increased its production, and, as the figures just given show, its record in this respect was one of consistent and rapid progress.

The increase of Queensland's external indebtedness during the twenty years 1880-99 represented an annual charge of £1,300,000. This was covered several times by the increased production of the colony during the same period, and was not in a true sense a burden to the community. The position of the other colonies, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, was very different. During the twenty years 1880-99 the external indebtedness of these four colonies was increased by about 136 millions, involving a yearly interest charge of about 6·8 millions ; in the same period the export of domestic produce was increased by about 2·6 millions. The difference between these sums, namely 4·2 millions, represents the dead-weight that the community had to carry on account of the unremunerative introduction of capital during the period. This result is the more astonishing as, in spite of a considerable emigration, there was an increase of population amounting to over 41 per cent. The decline in prices of the principal articles of colonial production accounts for the small expansion in the value of the exports ; but even if prices had remained unchanged, the increase of production would not have been sufficient, when compared with the population, to meet the charges due to the augmented debt on public and private account. The four colonies were not, however, equally affected either as regards population or production. New South Wales, with an increase of population of 60 per cent between the period 1880-84 and 1895-99, showed an increase of nearly

30 per cent in its domestic exports ; Victoria and Tasmania, with an increase of from 30 to 35 per cent in population, showed no increase in exports ; while South Australia, whose population advanced 22 per cent, fell off 26 per cent in its domestic exports.

The loan expenditure of the Governments of these four colonies gave direct employment in 1890 and 1891 to nearly 60,000 men, and the reduction of that expenditure brought down the numbers to 30,000 in 1892, 25,000 in 1893, 17,000 in 1894, and 12,000 in 1895. The men thus thrown out of employment would gradually have been absorbed in the general body of workers and have helped to increase the production of the country, but, almost coincidently with the reduction of Government employment in the east, there was a development of gold-mining in the west, of which the young and enterprising were not slow to take advantage ; and during the nine years 1892-1900 Western Australia drew over 108,000 persons from the other colonies, chiefly from Victoria and South Australia. The immediate effect of this great efflux was to relieve the labour situation in the east and the distress that followed the reduction of Government employment and the financial upheaval. If these men had remained in the east, the labour crisis would have been more acute, and the process of recovery might have been longer drawn out. But the men who went to Western Australia and the 20,000 others who left the southern colonies for Queensland were mostly in the prime of life and physical condition, and their departure, while it enriched Western Australia and Queensland, bettered their own condition, and relieved the urgent pressure on the labour market, was ultimately harmful to the colonies they deserted, and is sufficient in itself to account for the slow development of production which was shown between the crisis and the close of the century.

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NEW SOUTH WALES

At the beginning of 1894 New South Wales, like its immediate neighbours, was in a condition of the greatest industrial depression. In the country districts trained and experienced agricultural workers could indeed find employment, but owing to the very low prices which prevailed the farmers worked with the narrowest margin of labour and were unwilling to engage unskilled men. The wages of ordinary agricultural labourers varied from 10s. to 15s. per week, with board and sleeping accommodation, but the general wage was more often at the lower than the higher figure. In the metropolitan district conditions were much worse. There had been a growing scarcity of employment from the time of the bank failures, as the reduced spending power of the people had affected trade generally. Skilled mechanics suffered more from lack of employment than any other class. Very little building construction was being carried out, and the chairman of the painters' trade union, presiding at a meeting of all the building trades unions in January 1894, stated that there were in Sydney about 15,000 men who had been apprenticed in these trades, that about 5000 of them had turned to other employments when their own failed them, and that of the rest 6000 were unemployed, and the remaining 4000 were gaining a precarious livelihood, being occupied mostly upon repair work and working on the average not more than three days a week. The building trade employers, on the other hand, said that only 30 per cent of the really competent workmen were unemployed. The assertion of the trade unionists was nearer the truth, as the only opportunities for regular employment in the building trade were on thirty or forty small houses or shops in course of erection, and two large buildings which would occupy about 600 men.

In spite of this vast extent of unemployment the unions were doing their utmost to enforce a standard rate of 8s. per day for all classes of artisans. In many cases, however,

the only way to obtain work was by accepting lower rates. Many carpenters were reported to be working on piece rates, contrary to the rules of their society, and earning very low wages, in some cases as little as 3s. and 4s. per day. The union refused to sanction this breach of trade practice, but was helpless to prevent it, and took no steps to expel the men who were engaged in it; indeed all the building trades unions were so afraid of disappearing altogether that men were allowed to retain their membership although they had long ceased to contribute to the union funds. The labourers in the building trades were as badly off for work as the mechanics, but they had less difficulty in turning to other occupations, and many of them took advantage of the opportunities offered by the Government to fossick for gold in the streams and creeks and on the abandoned goldfields. The building trade was the largest industry in Sydney, and lack of employment in it bulked large in the public eye, but in other trades the difficulty of obtaining work was equally great. The mechanics in the iron trades suffered acutely, as did also men in the various trades connected with shipping, and clerks and shop assistants found it almost impossible to find work at their accustomed employment.

Throughout the colony then, at the beginning of 1894, mechanics and labourers of all kinds were suffering from reduced wages, irregular employment, and actual unemployment. There seemed little prospect of any immediate beneficial change, as private employers were everywhere reducing expenditure, being themselves pressed by the banks and other financial institutions to repay the advances made to them before the crisis. In these circumstances the unions turned for aid to the Government. A Labour Conference of an intercolonial character was held in Sydney during January 1894; at this a resolution was passed calling upon the Governments of all the colonies to set up departments of Labour, collect statistics of employment, organize surplus labour locally, and place unemployed men on the land in labour settlements. But times had changed,

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and even if the Governments had felt inclined to revert to a policy of vigorous construction of public works, they could not now borrow for such a purpose. In New South Wales there was no serious intention of engaging in any extensive plans for succouring the unemployed, but the Government decided to facilitate the formation of labour settlements, and also sought through the Labour Bureau to bring the requirements of employers to the notice of the unemployed. In some cases men were sent to such Government works as were then being carried on, and passes over the railways were freely given to those who desired to leave Sydney for the country districts to seek work or fossick for gold. By these means there was some, but by no means extensive, relief given to the unemployed.

The only industry which at this period was able to absorb much labour was gold-mining, and the goldfields, though they showed no sensational results, were yet a great boon in providing independent employment of such obvious value to the community. In December 1893 there was a fortunate and important discovery of gold at Wyalong, and, as it was an easily accessible alluvial field, a large number of men were immediately attracted to it. During January and February 1894 many men were sent to the field by the Labour Bureau, but the issue of free passes was discontinued in March on the advice of the goldfield officials. At the middle of this month 3000 miners were already at work, and hundreds more were arriving daily, but the development of the field in so short a time was not such as to afford employment for all these, and a few weeks later the stream of swagmen departing from the Wyalong field was as great as the flow to it had been.

During 1894 Western Australia began to claim the attention of the unemployed in Eastern Australia. Not many persons, however, were attracted from New South Wales; the length and expense of the journey, as well as the very difficult conditions of life in the new fields, proving great deterrents to would-be emigrants.

In April 1894 the Pastoralists' Federal Council, comprising representatives of the wool-growers of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland, met at Sydney and issued a new shearing agreement to supersede the agreement drawn up jointly by the Pastoralists' and the Shearers' Unions, which had been in use for the previous three years. The conditions of work formulated by the pastoralists did not greatly differ from the joint agreement of 1891, except that the Shearers' Union was deliberately ignored, the owner or manager of a station being declared to be sole arbiter in any dispute which might arise concerning the interpretation of the conditions. The rate for hand-shearing was maintained at 20s. per hundred sheep for the whole of New South Wales, except that part of it south of the Murrumbidgee, where the rate was fixed at 18s. For machine-shearing the price fixed was 17s. per hundred. This new agreement met with strong opposition from the Shearers' Union. Williams, the president of that body, at once issued a manifesto declaring that it was a very serious breach of faith on the part of the Pastoralists' Union to ignore the 1891 agreement and "to try, without consulting us, to force another agreement upon us." He offered to meet the pastoralists or to allow the machinery of the Conciliation and Trades Disputes Act to be used to arrive at a settlement, but refused absolutely, on behalf of the union, to accept the new agreement. Before the matter could be carried further, the Shearers' Union became absorbed in the Australian Workers' Union, which also contained other station hands, and early in May this important body issued a manifesto declaring its grievances against the Pastoralists' Union. The latter was accused of having sought to break up the Shearers' Unions, first by insisting on "freedom of contract" in 1891, secondly by the use made of the "reference" system which the pastoralists had subsequently introduced, and finally by the proposed new agreement. The chief objections to the new agreement were recounted. These were that it was issued without any conference

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with the shearers' representatives, that it reduced the rates of wages, and that Clause 8 of the agreement deprived the shearers of some of their rights at common law, for it declared "the person in charge of the shed on behalf of the employer . . . shall be the person to decide all questions arising under this agreement . . . and his decision shall be final and conclusive." The manifesto ended by urging all shearers to decline engagement except on the terms of the 1891 agreement.

Meantime the pastoralists through their office in Sydney were busily recruiting shearers for the approaching season. The new agreement had been drawn up with considerable skill. It was such that the bulk of the shearers, had they accepted it, would not have been able to discover any essential departure from the conditions under which they had worked during the last three seasons, certainly nothing likely to affect their earnings, while at the same time a serious blow was aimed at their union.

The sheds in the Bourke district were the first in the colony to shear. Here the new agreement made no alteration in wage rates, either for shearers or other employees, and the pastoralists hoped that in such times of stress the men would not stand upon points of procedure when their immediate material interests were not affected. On 21st May the local representatives of the Australian Workers' Union asked the pastoralists to confer with them in regard to the new agreement, which undoubtedly they would have accepted, with a few verbal alterations, provided that their face could be saved by a conference. But this was exactly what the pastoralists had determined not to help them to do, and the conference was refused as "unnecessary." The shearers then applied to the Clerk of Awards of the Council of Conciliation and Arbitration and asked for mediation, but when the Pastoralists' Union was applied to by that functionary the reply was returned on 4th July that "there is not anything at issue between the general body of shearers and the pastoralists, and the latter, therefore, have no dispute which could be referred to

arbitration. Our workmen are readily accepting our terms and the work of shearing is going on quietly in those districts in which it has commenced." The workmen here referred to were not members of the Shearers' Union ; they were non-union shearers from Victoria, Tasmania, and New Zealand, with a small sprinkling of unemployed of other trades who had taken up shearing work for the first time. The state of quietude described by Whiteley King, the secretary of the pastoralists, as prevailing in the shearing districts did not continue long after shearing had become general. The union men formed large camps in the neighbourhood of the stations and interfered, whenever opportunity offered, with the men who were shearing. Disturbances of a violent character grew frequent as fresh batches of non-union men were sent up to the stations. In August, as the season approached its height, there were many disturbances, especially in the western districts, and free labourers frequently met with very violent treatment. At the end of the month the steamboat *Rodney*, which was carrying non-union shearers, was captured and burnt by union agents near Pooncarie on the Darling, and at various times attempts were made to destroy by fire woolsheds and other property of prominent pastoralists. Riots and personal assaults on non-unionists were common ; in fact, acts of violence grew more numerous and more serious as the unionists began to realize that their strike would be in vain and that the Pastoralists' Union was able to supply all the labour its members required. On 29th August, Williams, now the president of the Australian Workers' Union, wrote to Reid, the Premier, to draw attention to " the urgent necessity of so amending the Trades Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Bill as to prevent a repetition of the present disastrous state of things." He wished the law amended so as to compel both parties to a dispute to come before the Conciliation Board before a strike was declared. Reid replied by asking the Australian Workers' Union to discountenance disorder. A week later Williams offered, through the Clerk of Awards of the Conciliation

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Tribunal, to discuss the following terms with the pastoralists : “ . . . for the remainder of the season the shearers to work upon the terms of what is known as the verbal agreement ; the remuneration to be on the basis of the 1891 agreement ; in all other respects both this and the agreement of 1894 to be set aside. Pastoralists and shearers to agree between themselves upon all other matters at the sheds and without intervention from either party.” With regard to the future he stipulated that “ the Pastoralists’ Union should meet representatives of the Shearers’ Union not later than January 1895 to settle an agreement for that year in the presence of representatives of the Court of Arbitration, and if a difference arose it should be submitted to the ruling of those representatives.” The shearers, that is to say, were prepared to acquiesce in almost any terms for 1894, provided they could be sure that for subsequent years the principle of mutual agreement would be conceded. But this was precisely the point upon which the pastoralists were fighting. Their only reply to Williams’ offer was the statement that “ as it was obviously made for purposes of publication and as it has already appeared in the newspapers, it calls for no further reply.” The bitter struggle continued during September. There were many acts of violence by the shearers, and much damage was done to property. The police made numerous arrests, and men who were convicted for these outrages received very severe sentences.

The supply of non-union labour continued to be ample, and towards the beginning of October it became evident that the fight was over for the time. The Australian Workers’ Union had exhausted its funds and could expect no adequate help from other organizations. The men camped on the squatters’ runs gradually dispersed, in many cases going to other districts, there to accept work under the pastoralists’ agreement. At the middle of October so many men were offering themselves at the stations that it was no longer necessary for the Pastoralists’ Union to send up men

from Sydney. The strike terminated without any official admission of defeat, but left the Australian Workers' Union, for a time, powerless and discredited.

The Sydney Bootmakers' Union was a strong body and determined to force all non-unionists in the trade to join the union. Early in 1895 it passed a rule forbidding its members to work with non-unionists, but decided to apply the rule gradually without attempting a general strike. There were sixteen principal factories, and a strike was ordered in four of these, to test the powers of resistance of the employers. The Masters' Association, on its part, decided not to be attacked in detail and closed all the factories, thus locking out about 2000 persons. The union was well organized, and by dint of constant pressure had contrived to include in its ranks all but a very small minority of the workers. This minority was now very actively canvassed, and the arguments usually found efficacious in such cases applied to them, so that before a week had passed they had all agreed to join the union. The men, therefore, had gained their point and, having no further quarrel with the employers, returned to work, stipulating, however, that wages should continue to be paid according to the agreement entered into in 1891.

Very few of the unions were so well organized or in such a strong position as the Bootmakers', and most of their attempts to obtain concessions or resist reductions proved abortive. There was no other general strike except that of the printers in Sydney, who, in October 1894, struck against a reduction in their minimum wage rate from £2:16s. a week to £2:10s. decreed by the employers. The printers were a well-organized union, but all chance of their being able to bring the strike to a successful issue was taken from them by the ability of the master printers to obtain from Melbourne all the labour they required in the grades affected; and the strikers were glad to go back to work at the reduced rates, wherever their services were accepted. Many, however,

had to remain unemployed, as the masters preferred to retain the non-unionists whom they had imported.

The times were very unpropitious for trade unionism. Nevertheless, the Labour authorities in Sydney made a great effort not only to maintain the organization of Labour, but to extend and perfect it; they revived the scheme for federating Labour throughout Australia, which had originated at the Intercolonial Trades Congress held at Ballarat in 1891. A Conference of the Labour bodies in Sydney was convened by the Trades and Labour Council to consider the various proposals for federation. This Conference met in May 1894, and with practical unanimity decided in favour of federation. It was also decided that Sydney should form a district council of the Australian Federation, the new council taking the place of the Trades and Labour Council, which had been the central organization since 1856. Other districts were contemplated for New South Wales, and when these and the districts being formed in the other colonies were organized, such co-operative action as was necessary for the working of the Federation would be undertaken. In accordance with this plan the Sydney District Council of the Australian Labour Federation came into being on 1st July 1894.

The leading spirits in trade union circles had long realized the immense power which organized Labour might wield if it wished, and they now considered, in spite of recent events, that an occasion would soon arise when they could make that power felt. Their difficulty lay solely with the rank and file, who, though strong believers in unionism, were compelled to choose between unemployment and employment at non-union rates; choosing the latter, they became in the elegant phraseology of the day "scabs" or "blacklegs." Many others from sheer lack of means were unable to continue their subscriptions to their unions, and thus became defaulters. In the circumstances the unions were practically helpless. The defaulters were not disturbed in their membership, though not permitted to take part in the management of union

affairs, and as regards the others, it was clear that strikes against reduced wages would be worse than futile. As it was inexpedient to expel members who were driven by necessity to accept lower than union rates, all that could be done was to turn a blind eye to the breach of the rules, unless indeed the matter was too flagrant to be passed over.

The trade union leaders were obsessed by the idea that the fiction of high wages must be maintained, otherwise the wages level would become permanently lowered; and while tacitly accepting the lower rates, never failed to proclaim, when opportunity offered, that the higher rates were still current and alone officially authorized. It is instructive therefore to observe the attitude of the trade union leaders towards the wages of men employed on public works or Government contracts. In October 1894 the Minister for Works appointed a Board of Reference to consider the question of rates of wages in these contracts. After careful consideration this Board drew up a scale "as a basis of wages in future contracts." It was not intended to apply to the best workers, or to apprentices and boys, but was to be regarded rather as a schedule of minimum rates for ordinary workmen. The wages were reckoned for an eight-hours day, and overtime was to be paid according to the custom of the trade concerned. The scale was as follows :

	Within Sydney and Newcastle districts.		Outside these areas.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Carpenters	8	0	7	0
Masons	10	0	8	0
Bricklayers and plasterers .	9	0	8	0
Blacksmiths	8	6	7	0
Boilermakers and riveters .	9	0	9	0
Fitters	9	0	9	0
Painters	7	6	6	6
Plumbers	8	6	7	6
Shipwrights	9	6	9	6
Copper and brass workers .	9	0	9	0
Moulders	7	0	7	0
Engine-drivers	7	6	6	6
Workmen not included .	6	0	5	0

The rates applicable to Sydney and Newcastle corresponded with those accepted by the trade unions in Sydney, and the reduction made in the case of certain country workers was in accordance with the general usage. In fixing these wages the Board of Reference did not consult with the trade unions, but when the rates were before him for adoption the Minister for Works conferred with several members of the Labour Party in close touch with the unions. Their advice on various points was not disregarded and the principle of a minimum wage was highly approved if not suggested by the Labour Unions. Nevertheless, the Labour leaders continually lent countenance to appeals against the schedule of wages on the score that it was fixed too low. Once or twice, in exasperation, the Minister offered to remove trades from the scale altogether. The unions invariably declined to accept such a settlement and went on with their protests without obtaining any concession from the Minister. The objectors were not, of course, ignorant of the fact that the schedule rates were not in any case below, and in some cases were above, what unionists were accepting with the free consent of their unions, but they feared that the acknowledgment of the rates might lead to their becoming stereotyped as the union rates of the colony.

The Maritime Workers' Union had completely collapsed after the great strike; in November 1894 an attempt was made to reorganize it, but with little success. The union was indeed re-established, but the majority of the workers completely ignored it. Other unions in like case with the Maritime Workers', who sought to reanimate themselves, had even less success, and, while retaining their registration, never met or performed any of the functions of a trade society. Even some of the once powerful unions connected with the building trades, having lost a large number of their members, seemed likely to become moribund; to avoid this, what was called a Federated Building Trades Council was formed, which its promoters hoped would be a centre of activity and infuse new life

into the separate unions. The Council was empowered to obtain funds to be used "for strictly trade purposes," and its most important functions were to encourage resort to conciliation and arbitration and to take combined action in unavoidable disputes. The weekly contribution of members was fixed at 1½d. per week, a sufficient indication of the depressed condition of the trades comprised in the new Council.

The close of 1894 was marked by an increase in unemployment in nearly all industries. The Labour Bureau was very unpopular with skilled workers, yet the number of men applying there grew steadily larger, while the only employment the authorities could suggest was fossicking for gold. The Report of the Labour Bureau for the year 1894 showed that 13,575 men had been registered, an increase of 1430 on the figures for the previous year; there were 1156 building-trade artisans, 2116 coal-miners, and 4548 general labourers; almost every class of occupation being represented amongst the registrations. Besides these 13,575, there was a large number of men already on the books of the Bureau. During the year about 6000 were provided with work, chiefly of a temporary kind, and some 11,000 were given railway passes and a cheap equipment, and sent fossicking for gold. This was an occupation which rarely failed to find a man the means of living; sometimes indeed it provided a good deal more, as probably one-tenth of the fossickers were able to send for their wives and families to share with them the excitement and privations of the gold-seekers' life.

The work of the Labour Bureau was chiefly concerned with getting men away from Sydney, where there was no work to be had, and sending them to places where they might chance upon it; but as many as were disposed of in this way were replaced at once by men arriving from the country districts to seek work or change in town. There was no decrease, therefore, in the number of the unemployed. Towards the end of February 1895 a public meeting was held at Sydney which was attended by

delegates of the Labour Electoral League, the Australian Socialists' League, the Newcastle and Illawarra Miners, and other important bodies. It was then stated that figures supplied by trade union officials showed that nearly 20,000 *bona fide* workers were without employment as well as about 6000 men of a "doubtful" class. The meeting urged the Government to borrow £2,000,000, and put in hand without delay the construction of various public works, so as to absorb as many of the unemployed as possible. The proposal could not be accepted by the Government, as the placing of a loan was impracticable; but the destitution in Sydney was so pronounced that it was necessary that something should be done for its relief. In the condition of the finances of the colony there was little that could be done. At the Centennial Park men were put on what was known as "sand-shifting," a useless occupation, which gave a pretence of employment, those engaged receiving subsistence rations in return for their labour, and each man being restricted to one day's work a week. Work had been carried on for some time clearing Shea's Creek, an effluent of Botany Bay, and batches of men were employed there for a fortnight at a time so as to give the whole body of the unemployed an opportunity of earning a little money. The work was laborious and the pay was fixed at 6s. per day. By these makeshift measures the Government satisfied itself that it was doing something to relieve unemployment, the existence of which it could not affect to ignore.

The coal-mining districts were also in a very depressed state. During the years of company promoting many new coal companies had been formed and new mines opened; but the New South Wales coal export had received a severe blow from the strikes of 1890 and 1891, and was further affected by the fall in the local demand, due to the financial disasters which followed. The chief result of the formation of new companies had been to increase the competition for contracts, and eventually to lower prices. In 1891 the selling price of coal at the

ship's side was 11s. per ton, in January 1892 it was reduced to 10s., in 1893 to 9s., and in 1894 to 8s. Not only so, but the vend had collapsed at the close of 1893, and thereafter the miners were not able to obtain the rates of pay which they would have had under the 1888 agreement. Under that agreement the minimum hewing rate for large coal was 3s. 6d. per ton, but the actual rates at Newcastle in the beginning of 1894 were 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. per ton at the non-union collieries, to 3s. 2d. at the others.

In the southern coal district employment was also bad, and in January 1894 the associated employers of the district, who controlled seven mines, reduced hewing rates from 2s. 2d. to 2s. per ton. At three of the collieries the men refused to accept the reduced rate and were consequently locked out. The proprietors were able to close their mines without inconvenience and with little loss, as under the terms of their association the other collieries supplied the coal they required to fulfil their contracts. The miners being thus helpless, with starvation facing them as they were not in receipt of strike pay, agreed to an unconditional surrender.

In the Newcastle district the miners' unions were fast becoming disorganized and the men were gradually slipping away. The payment of levies was systematically refused and a general break-up of the miners' organizations seemed imminent. On 13th December 1894 the Wallsend colliers met to discuss a decision of the management to reduce the hewing rate for large coal to 2s. 10d., and refused to accede to it. This refusal was followed by a cessation of work which brought the number of men in the district on strike to 1340. The funds of the unions had fallen so low and their income was now so reduced and precarious, that the payment of strike pay to such a number was a burden they could not carry. In their difficulty some of the leaders thought that by making things worse they might ultimately become better; they therefore proposed that the unions should make a bold stand and demand an increase in wages, with the alternative of a general strike.

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Such action, they thought, would infuse new life into the miners' organizations and bring back the feeling of solidarity which was fast disappearing. These views so far prevailed that, on 22nd December 1894, the district representatives met and decided to demand an increase of 4d. per ton in the hewing rate, and "if it were refused the miners should ballot on the subject of a strike." The union demand was refused by the employers on the ground that the selling price of coal, which was about 7s. per ton, did not admit of any increase in the hewing rate. A ballot was then taken, and on 14th January 1895 it was announced that the majority of two-thirds, necessary before a strike could be declared, had not been obtained. The sectional strikes at Greta, Wallsend, and the Co-operative Colliery were not affected by this ballot, and were continued although the unions found it increasingly difficult to find strike pay for the men who were out.

In the middle of February 1895 a meeting of the Miners' Delegate Board at Newcastle declared all strikes in the district at an end and that every man must do as best he could for himself. The Wallsend men went back to work at the reduced rate of 2s. 10d., the Greta miners, who had been on strike for a year, applied to be taken back, but their places had been filled by non-unionists and their application was refused; a similar application on behalf of the miners at the Co-operative Colliery met with like treatment. There were now about 2000 miners and other persons connected with the mines out of work and without any resources, and great destitution prevailed throughout the district. Nevertheless, at the beginning of March 1895, 600 miners at Minmi struck work in protest against a reduction in wages proposed by the management.

The whole of the mining population was seething with discontent, which it was feared might involve the colony at any time in all the disasters of a general strike. It was a knowledge of this that led the Reid Government to introduce a Bill to amend the Trades Disputes Act of 1892, providing that if one party to a dispute applied to

the Conciliation Board and the other refused its services, the Board should nevertheless have power to refer the dispute to arbitration. The Bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly but thrown out by the Council. This action of the Council was ill received in the mining districts and greatly embittered the relationship between the miners and the proprietors and non-unionists. The strike at Minmi led to scenes of great violence, and a considerable body of police was drafted to the district to protect the mining properties. The miners were convinced that the proprietors were planning a general reduction of wages, strikes were declared at the Newcastle Company's Colliery and at Lambton, and there was a clamour for a general strike. Towards the end of April the district representatives met and decided upon a ballot on the question, which resulted in a large majority of votes being cast for a general strike. In accordance with this decision notices were handed in demanding a return to the agreement of 1888 with the alternative of a strike. But the union men at some of the largest collieries had taken no part in the ballot and refused to hand in strike notices, and as there was no means of coercing them to follow the lead of the extremists, the Miners' Delegate Board decided that in the circumstances it would be injudicious to carry out a general strike, and the men at Minmi and elsewhere were advised to make what terms they could with the mine-owners.

As the shearing season approached, there was a general apprehension that there would be a renewal of the conflict between the pastoralists and the shearers. There was no mistaking the fact that the pastoralists were as determined as in 1894 to insist upon the use of their form of agreement, and the attitude of the Australian Workers' Union was uncertain. On 2nd May 1895 a Convention representing 22,000 bush-workers met at the Sydney Trades Hall, in a session extending over more than a week, to consider the policy to be adopted for the ensuing season. It was first of all decided to remove the headquarters of the Shearers'

Union from Creswick in Victoria to Sydney, as an administrative precaution, in the event of a strike being ordered, but in the end the Convention decided for peace. In coming to this decision, the delegates were swayed chiefly by two considerations. There was a large supply of unemployed labour that the pastoralists could draw upon in case of need, and the Workers' Union being very short of funds could give no material assistance to the shearers in their struggle with the pastoralists. The Convention therefore resolved (1) "That the Australian Workers' Union suspend the rules relating to shearing agreements for the current season, but members shall maintain the prices fixed by the union for each colony, and with a view of putting the union on a strong financial footing members be strongly urged to organize their forces, financially and otherwise, by renewing their tickets for 1896, and enrolling as many new members as they possibly can": (2) "That branches be empowered to arrange local agreements, involving no concessions in regard to prices or otherwise, such local agreements to be submitted to the Executive."

The Convention also issued a manifesto stating that "this change of tactics on our part is simply one of policy, and is taken in order to give breathing time, and to permit the Australian Workers' Union to accumulate funds for the carrying out of its several objects. . . . The struggle is narrowed to the one point of price of shearing and rates of wages, and as it is only in a few districts that a difference exists, our position will be the stronger." In fact, the Australian Workers' Union, since the opening of its last campaign against the squatters, had suffered badly in membership and in funds; it required time to pull itself together again, and during the remainder of this period there was no concerted action on the part of the shearers against the terms of the agreement of 1894. On the other hand, the pastoralists made no organized effort to reduce wages, so that the shearing of 1895 passed without any difficulties except of a purely local or personal character.

The year 1895 was marked by a serious drought, which

diminished the opportunities of employment for men in rural occupations, and added to the difficulties of the gold-seekers, many of whom returned to Sydney. By the middle of the year the number of unemployed in the metropolitan area had very much increased. Processions of unemployed traversing the streets were a miserable spectacle to which Sydney was treated daily. These exhibitions became an offence to the general population and there was an insistent demand that the Government should do something to get the unemployed out of sight. Owing to the drought it was useless to send men to search for work in the country districts, as would otherwise have been done, and in the absence of any general plan for dealing with the unemployed, the Government increased the number of men at Shea's Creek and put about 900 to work at the Centennial Park. Others were sent to cut down the indigenous shrubs and flowering plants on the Church and School lands lying between Sydney and Randwick; this destruction of the little that was left of the native flora close to Sydney was an act of pure vandalism, and even if it had not been such, was a waste of money, as was also a great deal of the work at the Centennial Park. At the request of the Government the Railway Commissioners undertook the work of regrading some of the railway lines crossing the mountains, and further employment of this class was promised.

It was generally recognized that, owing to the closing of the London loan market, no extensive construction of public works could be undertaken, and the action of the Government just referred to satisfied the unemployed that the authorities were anxious to find employment for them. This partially allayed their discontent, and in spite of the industrial *malaise* there was much less agitation and fewer strikes in Sydney during 1895 than in the preceding year.

In the Newcastle district labour conditions grew steadily worse towards the close of the year. The price of coal had fallen, and the production had declined. In October 1895, notice was given to the miners at the Cardiff mine that the

hewing rate would be reduced to 2s. 2d. per ton. This rate was in force at other collieries, but was not general, and its threatened extension roused the resentment of the miners and helped the work of the officials of the Miners' Union, who were striving, with indifferent success, to improve the organization. Trade of all kinds was severely depressed throughout the whole district and the renewed prospect of a general strike roused the local authorities to action. At the end of October representatives of all the municipalities in the mining area met and resolved to try to bring together representatives of the different coal-mining interests in order to devise a means of securing uniformity in the selling price of coal. The Miners' Union was very anxious that this plan should succeed, and Curley, the miners' secretary, wrote inviting the coal-owners to meet the miners' delegates in conference. The mine-owners showed little inclination for such a meeting; nevertheless, in the circumstances, they could not refuse to meet the men, and a Conference was held on 28th December 1895. Most of the coal-owners were convinced that the foreign trade would not bear any increase in the selling price of coal, and therefore they saw no advantage in association, and no prospect of a rise in wages. The price of coal was 6s. 9d. to 7s. per ton, and the hewing rate at the best paying mines was 3s. On 30th January 1896 a deputation of employers and miners saw Reid at the Treasury, and endeavoured to persuade him to legalize a "vend," with a view to raising coal prices and wages, but though he expressed sympathy he refused to do what it desired.

Meanwhile, the organization of the miners was steadily proceeded with. At an aggregate meeting held at Lambton on 29th February, the secretaries of the various lodges were authorized to demand the minimum wage of 3s. 6d. per ton fixed by the 1888 agreement; the demand was to be made on 9th March, and if not granted within a week a ballot was to be taken on the question of a general strike. The mine-owners with little hesitation rejected the

demand, and, a ballot being taken, a strike was authorized. The executive decided that on 6th April fourteen days' notice of a general strike should be given; at the same time the coal-owners were asked to meet the miners' representatives not later than 2nd April. The meeting took place, but there was no adjustment of views between the two parties, and on 6th April the strike notices were handed in. The mayors of the district met on 13th April and asked for the intervention of the Premier, suggesting that the matters at issue should be referred to a court of arbitration composed of three representatives of each side, with the Governor as chairman. This arrangement was impossible, but Reid declared his intention of doing all he could to promote a settlement, and in order to permit of his taking action the strike was suspended for a week. On 22nd April, at Reid's invitation, representatives of the owners and the miners met in conference at his office in Sydney, and drew up the following terms: (1) The proprietors unanimously undertake that they will not reduce the present hewing rate until 31st December 1897, and not then unless it is necessary. (2) They agree that this Conference be adjourned to 9th September 1896, when the question of an increase in the hewing rate shall be gone into, with a view to an increase, if circumstances should warrant it. (3) The undertaking not to reduce wages to be contingent on there being no strikes during the period concerned. These proposals were submitted to the miners' lodges, but were rejected by a considerable majority. On 26th April 1896 a general strike began.

A few of the mines worked by non-union labour continued open, but the number of men to whom they gave employment was small. The trade of Newcastle suffered a very serious interruption and, as the miners' union was almost without funds, the miners and their families were soon in dire want. At the beginning of June the miners expressed their willingness to return to work on the terms suggested at the Sydney Conference, but these the owners were no longer willing to concede. They contended that

the strike had so injured their trade that they were not in a position to pay more than 2s. 10d. per ton ; this they offered, but at the same time they expressed their determination no longer to recognize the unions. These terms were declined by the Miners' Executive and, after the strike had dragged on for another month, Reid invited the owners to confer with him, with the result that they agreed to offer 2s. 11d. per ton, and to allow the men to form unions, though they still declined to deal with the union officials. These terms were to remain open for ten days. On 8th July in the Legislative Assembly, Watkins, a Newcastle representative, moved the adjournment of the House, to impress upon the Government the necessity for making arbitration compulsory in strikes. The Government in reply gave a promise that the Bill of the previous year, lost in the Council, would be reintroduced, but not yet, as the time was inopportune. On 14th July a ballot of the miners on strike was taken as to the acceptance or rejection of the mine-owners' terms. There was a small poll at which 974 voted for acceptance, and 874 against. The strike was therefore declared to be at an end and the miners went back to work at once.

The first half of 1896, which was thus disturbed at Newcastle, was also a time of great difficulty in other parts of the colony. The harvest, which was poor by reason of the drought, had afforded much less employment than usual, and considerable numbers of men made their way to Sydney, wearied with tramping the country in search of work. Some attempt was made to deal with a most helpless class of the unemployed at the Pitt Town Labour Settlement, which, in June 1896, was placed under the Department of Public Instruction for use as a Casual Labour Farm. It was modelled on the Leongatha Labour Colony of Victoria. Unemployed men from Sydney were sent thither and were allowed to remain for a continuous period of three months. The men were employed chiefly on agricultural labour and provided with food and

clothing ; they received also a weekly wage varying from 2s. to 4s., according to their work. A manager was appointed, under whose direction the work of clearing, fencing, and tilling the land was carried on. The experiment did not prove successful ; the settlement never became self-supporting, nor did it effect much in reclaiming the broken-down men who formed the majority of the settlers. Their physical health was improved by regular food, proper clothing, and outdoor work, but few showed a strengthening of moral character, and most of them returned to their old habits of life.

Early in 1896, the drought in Western Australia having broken, many of the best class of unemployed, among whom was a large number of coal-miners, went to that colony and settled down on the goldfields. As the year advanced employment in Sydney itself grew better, and trade improved, as the port was attracting a greater share of the distributing business of Australasia ; the imports equalled those of 1892 and largely exceeded those of the intervening years, while the exports were still more satisfactory. There was, however, a large amount of pauperism and the Benevolent Society was giving outdoor relief to an unusually large number of families. Many of the unemployed had become demoralized by long absence from real labour, and the complaint was common that among them there was less desire to obtain work than to exist without working. In January there were 2500 men on relief work at the Centennial Park, obtaining one day's work and pay, and lounging about Sydney during the other six days. There was an intolerable amount of begging for food from house to house, the majority of the beggars being men who were not wishful to obtain regular work. There was a strong outcry that all forms of public relief should be withdrawn, and the unemployed should be compelled to accept any work offered them. The Government fell in with this view, and decided to end the system of relief at the Park. The number of men employed there was gradually reduced, batches being sent to the country districts.

where they were given employment on relief works of some public utility, and at the end of June 1896 the sand-shifting at the Park came practically to an end.

In order to deprive the unemployed in the country districts of the excuse of going to Sydney to look for work the Government arranged that agencies of the Labour Bureau should be set up in the principal country towns, after the plan recently adopted in Queensland, and the local clerks of petty sessions were put in charge of these agencies. The new system came into operation in March 1896; during that month 771 names of unemployed were noted and employment was found for a very small number. After the first month the applications of men requiring work grew smaller, and in a few months at most of the agencies no registrations were reported. This did not mean that unemployment had ceased, but that the country unemployed preferred looking for work rather than waiting in a town until application was made at the labour agency by employers requiring labour. The bureau at Sydney was engaged during the first half of the year in despatching men to the Government relief works and, after the drought broke up, to the goldfields to fossick.

The unemployed in Sydney were constantly being added to by arrivals from other colonies, especially from Victoria, whence 100 men were reported as arriving weekly; in spite therefore of the efforts of the Labour Bureau there appeared little diminution in their number, and wages showed no improvement.

The only important strike at this time was amongst the bootmakers, whose success in the preceding year has been recorded. The master bootmakers, encouraged by the success of other employers in depressing wages and expecting to be able to recruit labour in Melbourne where employment in the boot trade was bad, agreed amongst themselves to set aside the "statement" adopted in 1891, and reduce wages all round. The union at once ordered a strike; as it included the whole trade and was in

possession of considerable resources, it determined to fight to the end. The masters, disappointed in their expectation of obtaining non-union labour and realizing that there were not likely to be any important defections from the ranks of their employees, gave way and the men returned to work without making any concessions on the 1891 agreement.

During the latter half of 1896 the improved trade conditions of Sydney began to affect general employment. There was a slight revival in the building trade, and as a large number of building artisans had gone to Western Australia, there was fairly good employment for those who remained behind; in September it was reported that mechanics were refusing country jobs at 1s. per hour. In other trades also there was a noticeable improvement and the Labour Bureau began to find some difficulty in making up gangs of men for clearing scrub on the Bogan and elsewhere. The wages of carpenters, joiners, and plasterers were raised from 8s. to 9s. per day, but in most of the building trades the improvement lay in more regular employment rather than in increased pay. The shipping trade was so good that the efforts made to organize the wharf labourers and maritime workers, which had hitherto failed, now met with fair success. The seamen obtained an increase of £1 per month, and later there was such a further decided improvement in the shipping trade that the marine engineers thought it a fitting opportunity to ask for a reversion to the terms of the 1890 Agreement, which had been set aside in 1893, and their claim was conceded at the beginning of 1897.

The unemployed agitation, which had died down during 1896, revived early in 1897, mainly because of the number of country labourers whom the drought had driven back to Sydney. Although opposed to the opening of relief works in or near Sydney, the Government was unable to resist the pressure brought by its supporters in the Labour Party, and reopened the works at Centennial Park as a temporary expedient until the drought should break.

Gangs of about 200 men taken in rotation were given a week's work at the Park and paid 5s. per day. About 1600 men were registered for this work, so that each man obtained one week's work in two months. Although the Government was subjected to considerable pressure it refused to extend its operations. This pretence of affording relief had the effect intended, as the majority of the able-bodied labourers after a few weeks' sojourn in Sydney accepted railway passes and scoured the country districts in search of employment. Conditions in all rural occupations remained unsatisfactory until June 1897, when the drought completely broke up, thus enabling the farmers to employ more labour; and this, with the approach of the shearing season, greatly reduced the number of the unemployed in Sydney.

The distinctively town trades were not very greatly affected by the drought. The notable expansion of the trade of the Port of Sydney continued and benefited all classes of employment. This improvement extended to the coal trade and the Newcastle miners began to urge an increase in the selling price of coal, which had remained at about 7s. per ton. On 6th June 1897 the Miners' Union arranged for a Conference with representative coal-owners and suggested a renewal of the vend, an arrangement between the employers and the union, with an increase in the hewing rates. The owners declared a rise in prices to be impracticable, but the discussion was amicable and showed a marked improvement in the relations between the two parties. On 9th December a second meeting of mine-owners' and miners' representatives was held at Newcastle, at the request of the union. The miners contended that the time had arrived when steps should be taken to ensure uniformity in the rates of payment and conditions of working throughout the district. They again suggested the establishment of the vend to increase and maintain the selling price of coal. The mine-owners refused to take this step, but the opinion was gaining ground among them that the selling price of coal

was unduly low, and that it could be increased to 8s. per ton without any ill effects on trade. In the middle of 1898 two further Conferences were held, when it was arranged that an agreement should be drafted raising the price to 8s. per ton and providing for a uniform hewing rate. At these later Conferences the miners possessed a weapon quite distinct from the improved state of the coal trade. The Mines Act of 1896 provided that on demand every skip of coal brought to the surface should be weighed, in order that the miner might be paid according to his output. The custom was to weigh some only of the skips and to strike an average, the small coal not being reckoned. This provision of the Act had not been put in force, nor had the miners asked for it, but the question had arisen at Mount Kembla, and it had been decided in a court of law that the owner must weigh every skip if the miners desired it. It was well understood, at the Conferences in June and July 1898, that if the miners did not get some concessions they would insist upon the weighing clauses of the Act of 1896, while they were prepared to waive them if the mine-owners met their views.

As the carrying out of the clauses would have required the installation of additional weighing-machines and raised the question of payment for small coal, the mine-owners wished to evade it, if possible, and consented to the appointment of a joint committee of owners and miners to draft an agreement. This committee met on 27th August 1898, and agreed that the selling price of coal should be 8s. per ton and the hewing rate 3s. 2d., with a sliding scale providing that for every change of 1s. in the price of coal, the hewing rate should rise or fall 4d. per ton. This proposal was not accepted by the miners, who objected that it did not fix a minimum point below which wages should not fall, and that if coal should again be sold at 7s. per ton, the hewing rate would drop to 2s. 6d., which was 4d. or 5d. lower than it had been without any agreement. Besides the hewing rate, the miners desired that any

new agreement entered into with the coal-owners should deal with certain other questions affecting their work, in regard to which they wished to secure a uniform practice at the various mines.

At the beginning of October the Miners' Delegate Board, meeting in private, resolved to enforce the weighing clauses of the Act of 1896, and when this was made known to the owners they replied by asserting their determination to close their collieries. At this juncture the Minister of Mines stepped in, pointing out that the carrying out of an Act of Parliament was not a matter of arrangement between the owners and the miners, and that he intended to enforce the weighing clauses of the Act from 1st February 1899. This announcement put the owners in a position of difficulty, and, as they had no wish to close their mines, they arranged to meet the miners again for the discussion of the points of difference. This meeting was held in the middle of November, when it was decided that from 1st January 1899 the selling price of coal should be 8s. per ton and the hewing rate 3s. 2d. Another Conference took place on 7th January, at which both sides showed a conciliatory disposition. The owners showed that there must be a stoppage of work if the weighing clauses were put in operation, as proposed by the Minister, and the miners agreed to join the employers in seeking a few months' further delay. The Minister made no difficulty in granting an extension of time to 1st June 1899. In March the two parties entered upon a discussion of the terms for the payment of small coal, and these as well as various other matters of mutual concern were arranged amicably. The discussion between the two parties had extended over a period of two years, and the satisfactory conclusion arrived at was largely due to the tactful way in which the miners' representatives handled their case.

At the middle of 1897, as we have seen, the general labour position had improved, and this improvement went on steadily during the rest of the year. The Labour Bureau was still kept open, but the number of persons applying

there diminished from month to month. This change for the better was maintained during the succeeding year, and it was a sign of the altered conditions that at the General Elections of 1898 nothing was said about unemployment. In September 1898 it was officially estimated that the number of unemployed men then in Sydney had been reduced to 400; this doubtless was an under-estimate for a city of 450,000 inhabitants, and before the close of the year was greatly exceeded, as, in consequence of the drought, a large number of men thrown out of employment went up to Sydney, anticipating that a special effort would be made to find them employment at Christmas time. The Government did not open relief works, although a few days' work was given to all who applied in painting the iron railings of the parks. The public were thus given the spectacle of several hundred men engaged in the very centre of the city, on work they were highly incompetent to perform, in order that they should be able to receive a small dole which might not be stigmatized as charity. The constant spectacle of the gathering of the unemployed in Sydney from all parts of the colony and from the neighbouring colonies, with the disturbance of local conditions which such a gathering induced, roused many thoughtful persons to demand a rational system for dealing with unemployment, especially as it was plain that the body of professional unemployed had largely increased during recent years. In response to these demands the Government early in 1899 appointed a Board to consider the problem of unemployment and to deal with it on lines which it might approve. The Board made certain suggestions not of a practicable character, and shortly afterwards resigned without putting its theories to the test.

The conditions of trade during 1899 continued good. Sydney had definitely established itself as the great distributing centre of Australasia, the re-exports of the colony having risen from £4,700,000 in 1894 to £10,000,000 in 1898, and the shipping entered and cleared from 5·7

million tons to 6·9 millions in the same short period, Sydney had not lost population after the crisis; in 1898 the buildings erected before 1891 were fully occupied and new suburbs were springing up in answer to the demand for accommodation. The building trade was in a far better condition than it had been at any time since 1891, and in January 1899 the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners formally raised the standard rate of wages to 9s. per day, a rate which many of its members had long been receiving. Bricklayers and plasterers were able to earn from 10s. to 11s. per day and stone-cutters from 10s. to 12s. The drought was severe over the pastoral districts during 1899, but in spite of this the extraordinary rise in the price of wool produced a very hopeful feeling in the community, and wages in all the principal trades steadily rose. At the end of September 1899 the Government gave directions that the navvies employed on the railways should receive 7s. per day, and all skilled labour employed on public works should be paid union rates. The introduction of union rates on Government works was an achievement of the Labour Party, who had the Lyne Ministry, which had just succeeded Reid's, entirely in its hands. This was important industrially, as the Government was once more becoming, directly and indirectly, a large employer of labour.

The improvement in employment and wages continued until the early part of 1900, and in February of that year the carpenters demanded 10s. per day as their standard wage. The masters were disposed to resist the increase, but after a short strike the carpenters gained their point. Following the lead of the carpenters, other skilled workers, not in receipt of 10s. per day, put forward a claim to that wage, which was quietly conceded.

The great rise in the price of wool in 1899 was not sustained, and at the sales of the following year the price of average merino dropped from 1s. 1d. to 7d. per lb. This was a severe blow to the colony, putting a check on many forms of industrial activity, and the period closed without

a complete return of that prosperity which the community had been for seven or eight years patiently expecting.

VICTORIA

The weight of the bank failures of 1893 fell most heavily upon Labour, especially in Melbourne, where it was already suffering under the depression which had set in early in 1891. The volume of employment was at once greatly reduced ; all businesses that were being carried on under difficulties came to an end, as well as many that appeared to be flourishing ; shipping showed an enormous decline, as did also the business of merchants and warehousemen.

Owing to the depression in trade there were no important building or constructional works in hand when the crisis occurred. With that event building absolutely ceased ; partly built houses were abandoned to ruin and only indispensable repairs in buildings actually in use were carried out. The pass to which the lately flourishing building industry was brought was illustrated by the condition of the suburb of Brunswick, which depended mainly upon brickmaking and other trades ancillary to building construction. The bank failures brought all work in the district to a standstill, and, before long, it wore the appearance of having been deserted by its inhabitants. The decline in employment extended to every form of manufacture. The factories, which gave occupation to 54,413 persons in 1891, employed only 41,729 in 1893, and the Government, straitened in funds, added to the general unemployment by very considerably reducing the complement of men employed on public works.

Patterson was firm in his resolve not to open public relief works, and processions and deputations from the unemployed ceased to trouble him ; indeed the collapse of employment was recognized and accepted as inevitable, even by those who suffered most from it. Public demonstrations and appeals for help by the unemployed were scarcely attempted, and it was a matter of common

remark that the unemployed were less in evidence in Melbourne during the latter half of 1893 and the first nine months of 1894 than they had been at any time during the previous two years. It was generally recognized also that the collapse of industry was not a matter that a few months or a year would set right, and large numbers of persons left Melbourne for the country districts. There was at the same time a steady outflow to the other colonies and to New Zealand.

The population of Melbourne at the middle of 1892 exceeded 500,000, and it is probable that at the close of the succeeding year it had fallen to 450,000. Emigration to the Western Australian goldfields began in 1893 and became very extensive in the following year. During the months of February, March, and April 1894, more than 7000 persons left Melbourne by sea for Western Australia in addition to the large, but uncounted, numbers who went overland by way of Adelaide. The great majority of these emigrants were men who left their families, intending to return to them on the coming of better times. Emigration to New South Wales and New Zealand was different; it comprised both men and women, most of whom were permanently lost to the colony.

In spite of this great efflux of population there remained in Melbourne a large number of unemployed and partially employed persons, either destitute or on the verge of destitution, amongst whom skilled workers predominated. At Collingwood, Essendon, Richmond, Footscray, and other Melbourne suburbs containing a large working-class population, as well as at Geelong, Bendigo, and other provincial towns, arrangements were made by private charitable societies for the distribution of food and clothing, and soup kitchens were opened. The Government's labour colony at Leongatha had been established to deal with destitution brought on by unemployment and was open for the reception of any man who cared to enter it; but the payment for work at the farm was so small that no one could support a family on what he received there, and

the inmates were as a rule single men, or men who had deserted their families. A large proportion were drunkards accustomed to casual labour, and though the colony did something to restore these men to a decent life and preserve them from sinking into crime, it did not touch the real question of unemployment.

The seasons of 1893-94 and 1894-95 were good, and, increased labour being needed to gather in the harvest, employment was fairly good in the country districts. But the farmers and pastoralists were too hard pressed for money to be able to undertake work not actually necessary, and almost invariably the hired labour was dispensed with immediately it could be spared. Many of the Melbourne unemployed found work in the country districts, on farms and stations, during the summer, returning to Melbourne on their discharge, as they found casual employment and charity more easily obtainable in the city. The wages of all predial labour were lower during 1893-94 than in the preceding years, as is shown by the following statement of the average rates for the principal classes. The rates are by the week, and rations and sleeping accommodation were given in addition :

	1892-1893.		1893-1894.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Ploughmen	19	3	17	0
Farm labourers	16	7	15	0
Married couples	24	5	22	0
Mowers	26	9	23	9
Reapers	29	8	24	6

In Melbourne itself the immediate and most marked result of the bank crisis was the fall in the wages of all classes of labour. During the two years of depression preceding it, a brave show had been made of maintaining the nominal rates, but when the crisis came the struggle was given up. Mechanics in the building trades made no demur in accepting a reduction of from 25 to 30 per cent in their wages, and other skilled workers from 15 to 25 per cent. The following became the usual rates for day

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labour, and continued practically unchanged until the close of 1896 :

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Carpenters	7	6
Bricklayers	7	6
Masons	8	6
Plasterers	7	8
Painters	6	8
Blacksmiths	10	0
Boilermakers	10	6
Navvies or common labourers	6	0

The trade unions, lately so flourishing, were greatly reduced in importance; in many cases they ceased to exist, in others their members left them, and it is estimated that during 1893 the membership of the Victorian unions was reduced by more than three-fourths. The building trades, in which the unions had been so long and firmly established, were now represented by a few unions so small in membership and poor in resources as to make effective action, against wage reduction and trade changes, impossible on their part. Employers took little heed of representations made to them, and in many trades, recognizing the weakened condition of the unions, took the opportunity to shake off restrictions which had been imposed on them in more prosperous times.

In 1894 the Pastoralists' Association of Victoria and South Riverina was represented at the Pastoralists' Conference in Sydney, which drew up a new shearing agreement to be adopted throughout Australia. The Shearers' Union of Victoria, in common with those of the other colonies, was not consulted in the drawing up of this agreement and refused to recognize it. The resistance they offered was however ineffective as regards making any change in the determination of the pastoralists. It is true that at some of the sheds, when shearing began in August, a verbal agreement was substituted for the new agreement by station-owners who did not wish to drive their men to extremities; but this was the exception and where there was an attempt at disturbance, police protection was

obtained for shearers accepting the Pastoralists' agreement. But as the season advanced, and shearing became general, it was evident that no organized stand against the new agreement would be made. There were so many men in Melbourne willing to accept almost any agreement that it would have been impossible for the union to have enforced a strike. It may be noted that it was from Victoria that the greater part of the non-union labour was obtained which enabled the pastoralists to defeat the shearers of Queensland.

In September 1894 the Melbourne bootmakers struck against a new statement of piecework prices proposed by the manufacturers, which would reduce the earnings of the workers by about 2d. or 3d. per pair. Pending the introduction of this statement the manufacturers offered a minimum weekly wage of 35s. per man. The men refused to accept the new statement or the alternative; a strike ensued which lasted for several weeks, until the funds of the Bootmakers' Union were exhausted and the help of other unions came to an end. Early in 1895 the men were obliged to return to work on their employers' terms. In this strike the men were led by Trenwith and it was its unsuccessful ending that influenced him, later in the year, in his powerful demand for the establishment of Wages Boards. The bootmakers' strike was the most notable of the period; there were others, but none that the employers were not in a position to meet very easily by the engagement of non-unionists.

The Melbourne Trades Council was not slow to realize how powerless were the trade unions, still more the individual workmen, to fight against reductions in wages, and, seeing with alarm that rates were falling far below what would have been deemed possible previously, it endeavoured to get the Government and the municipalities to fix standard rates at which they would employ labour, which might form points of reference for other cases. In March 1894 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works accepted the principle, and passed a resolution

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providing that in all its contracts a minimum rate of wages should be fixed; a month later it fixed the minimum for unskilled labour at 6s. per day of eight hours. In June 1894 Trenwith moved in the Legislative Assembly "that in order to prevent sweating, in connexion with Government contracts, it is the duty of the Government to specify a minimum wage to be paid in connexion with all contracts let by the Public Works, Railway, and other departments of the State." He instanced the example of the London County Council and other English municipal bodies in support of his plea, but, though sympathetic speeches were made from both sides of the House, the motion was lost by two votes, considerations of economy being uppermost in the minds of those opposing the motion. In June 1896 the Melbourne City Council accepted the report of a committee on a scheme to secure the payment of "a fair and proper wage to all persons employed by the Council." This report dealt elaborately with the whole matter, fixing the minimum rates to be paid to those directly employed by the Council and to those in the employ of its contractors, and providing special rates for boys and elderly or partially disabled men. The minimum wage for labourers was fixed at 6s. per day, but with a reduction of 15 per cent on account of the circumstances of the times. This wage, therefore, became 5s. 1d.; labourers over fifty-five years of age were given 4s. 6d., boys 2s. 6½d. per day, and skilled workmen 11½d. or 1s. per hour.

The Factories Act Amendment Act became law in July 1896, and, in addition to the provisions regarding workshops, the Act authorized the appointment of special Boards to fix wages and piece-rates for persons employed either inside or outside factories in making clothes or wearing apparel or furniture, and Parliament had power to bring other trades within the Act.

The Boards fixed the minimum wage in the furniture trade at 45s. per week; in the clothing trades, piecework rates were fixed, with a minimum wage for women of 20s. per week, except in white work, when the rate was 14s.

The fixing of wages in this way led to some difficulties and hardships, especially as the standard was determined during a time of bad trade when the legal minimum was also the maximum rate. The better workers were retained, but the others could get no employment whatever, so that many persons who had been earning small wages could obtain none at all. The old and infirm especially suffered, and their lot would have been still worse had not the Chief Inspector under the Act deliberately refrained from prosecuting employers whose aged or infirm workers did not obtain the full weekly minimum, after satisfying himself that their work was fairly paid. A system of licences to such workers was ultimately established. The ordinary employees and the Trades Council looked with jealousy upon these licences, limiting their numbers as far as their influence enabled them so to do. This difficulty of dealing with the old workers gave a spur to the movement in favour of old-age pensions, which became a matter of practical politics before this period closed.

Although it was attended with certain embarrassments, the principle of Wages Boards was warmly approved by the Trades Council and the representative Labour bodies, and it was extended before the end of 1900 to twenty-two trades. It was very confidently predicted by persons who did not love trade unions, and even by some prominent unionists, that the Act would impair in some degree the sphere of the trade unions and lessen their influence with their members. In practice, however, its tendency was in the opposite direction; the number of unions was increased and, without their influence being lessened, their work was greatly simplified. Trades were brought under the Act through trade union agitation, and when a union did not exist one was usually formed as soon as the Wages Boards were appointed, as it was found that the union officials were better able to safeguard the interests of the employed than other representatives.

Unemployment was very great during 1895 and 1896, especially in the latter year when a severe drought occurred,

which not only prevented men from seeking work in the country districts, but sent down to Melbourne numbers of genuine country workers. Many fruitless appeals were made to the Government to establish relief works of some kind. In August 1896 a deputation, which was refused access to Ministers, interviewed the Governor on the subject; no satisfaction could, of course, be obtained from him, but the suggestions of the deputation were placed before the Ministry. Turner, the Premier and Treasurer, was at the time struggling with a deficit and firmly refused to add to the expenditure, so that, with the exception of undertaking a few small works for improving the grading of the railways, nothing was done to relieve the unemployed. During 1896 the hardships of unemployment were greatly added to by the increased price of bread and other staple articles of food, consequent on the drought, and the resources of the charitable societies were taxed to their limits. The low wages prevailing in Melbourne and the low prices of materials led to a small amount of building being undertaken, and the external trade of the colony showed some improvement during 1896, but there was no advance in wages. In 1897 labour conditions were slightly better in Melbourne, but in the country districts, owing to the continued prevalence of the drought, there was no change. There was a slight revenue surplus on the transactions of the year ending June 1897. When this was announced, several deputations from the unemployed waited on the Premier to press their claims for work. The Government could only make a pretence of doing something, about 200 men being given employment on the railways and in painting public buildings.

Reports obtained from public officials towards the close of 1897 showed that the pressure of unemployment had sensibly decreased. Large numbers of men had quitted Victoria; in 1896 the excess of emigration was some 22,000, and the efflux still continued. On the other hand the opening of the Western Australian mines had brought large orders to Victoria, by which the engineering and

machinery works, the furniture factories, and the boot trade had greatly benefited, and the employment in factories of all kinds almost reached the pre-crisis figures. The worst phase of unemployment had passed.

The season of 1897-98 was better than either of the two previous years; in May 1898 the drought broke up and with its passing there was an immediate improvement in employment in the country districts; this improvement presently extended to Melbourne, where the number of able-bodied unemployed had fallen to about 1000.

The revenue of the colony during 1898 showed substantial improvement; in view of this the Government decided on the construction of three small lines of railway, in all about 72 miles, which had the advantage of opening up for settlement a large area of fertile mallee country. In October 1898 employment in the building trades had improved so much that representatives of the resuscitated building trade unions decided to press for increased wages in certain trades, and a conference with representatives of the Builders' and Contractors' Association arranged that from January 1899 builders' labourers should receive 7s. per day, and carters and bricklayers 9s. The advance was premature apparently, for a month later the contractors gave three months' notice of withdrawal from the agreement, as they were able to obtain an ample supply of men at the previous rates. The unions were unable to prevent this reduction, a clear indication of the condition into which they had fallen.

Early in 1899 there was again much distress in Melbourne, in spite of an excellent harvest and a distinct revival in trade. There had been a temporary collapse of the mining boom in Western Australia, which drove many disappointed miners back to their homes in Victoria, and, owing to the terrible drought which still prevailed in the Riverina, a large number of Victorian labourers who usually obtained seasonal work in that district were compelled to remain unemployed at home. A deputation

from the unemployed saw Turner, and tried to persuade him to find work for them by constructing new railways and other public works ; but the Government, which had reduced the number of men in its employ by about 2000 at the beginning of the summer, declined to depart from its policy. As the distress due to unemployment increased, it became a matter of serious public concern, and on 19th April 1899, at the invitation of the committee of the unemployed, a public meeting was held in Melbourne to consider the whole question of unemployment. Hancock and Barrett were present with other prominent members of the Labour Party, while a totally different section of the community was represented by such men as Professor Rentoul and Murray Smith. A committee was appointed, of which Sir John Madden, the Chief Justice, became chairman, and this was almost immediately constituted a Government Board of Inquiry. The committee took a good deal of evidence, and satisfied itself that a large number of men were greatly in need of employment, but it was unable to suggest a method by which the evil could be redressed. A Labour Bureau had for some time been open at the railway department, to which men applied who were seeking work on the railways and this was used as a general registry for the unemployed. A great many men placed their names on the register, and making allowance for double registrations and like sources of error, it was found that there were at least 2000 men anxious for work but unable to find it. Many of these men were unwilling to take up-country work, had it been available, but reports received from the shires showed that, although wages for farming and pastoral workers were rising, there was not anywhere a shortage of labour.

Labour conditions improved throughout Victoria during the summer of 1899-1900, but meetings of the unemployed were still not infrequent, especially towards the middle of 1900 ; unemployment was greatly reduced, nevertheless, and the majority of trades were in a more satisfactory

position than they had been at any time since the crisis, and wages were steadily improving. In 1899 the bricklayers and other skilled workers in the building trades had established their claim to 9s. per day, and at the end of 1900 bricklayers at work on private contracts were occasionally obtaining 10s. per day, the recognized rate on the public works' contracts being 9s. 6d. The building trades, as we have seen, suffered more heavily than any others during the period of financial disaster, and their recovery was also more protracted. Building operations were carried out only in cases of necessity or where exceptional profits were looked for, and the wages of the artisans employed were less affected by the return of better times than might otherwise have been expected. In other branches of industry there was a marked revival, and wages shared in the upward movement. The Wages Boards had improved rates in many of the smaller trades; amongst these the furniture trade had increased the legal minimum from 45s. to 48s. per week.

The closing years of the century were free from any important strikes. The question of settling disputes by conciliation and arbitration had been greatly in the public mind immediately after 1893; during 1894 the subject was discussed frequently at the meetings of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, many members of that body being entirely in favour of that method of settling, and still more of avoiding, disputes. The Trades Hall Council also was strongly in favour of it. The trade unions had been so shorn of their strength that they had no hope of struggling successfully against the reductions in wages which at that time were constantly being effected. In October 1894 the Victorian Employers' Union, the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades Hall Council sent delegates to a conference on the subject. All the delegates were in favour of the compulsory reference of all disputes to a Board of Conciliation, but the Employers' Union was opposed to any form of compulsion as to the acceptance of the award. The Trades Hall dele-

gates saw no good to be obtained by an appeal to a Conciliation Board if its award could not be enforced, and the Conference therefore led to no practical result. But the subject was not dropped. The platform of the United Labour Party, drawn up in 1895, contained a demand for the establishment of courts of conciliation and compulsory arbitration, and in January 1896 the Governor's speech at the opening of Parliament stated that "my advisers have framed a proposal which is intended to give opportunities for amicable arrangement of those disagreements between employers and employed, which have been in the past a serious danger." No Act was passed, however, and as the next Parliament paid little attention to Labour matters, the only attempted legislation was a Bill introduced by Trenwith and Best from the Opposition benches in August 1900. This Bill aimed at the compulsory reference of all disputes to arbitration. It provided for the establishment of an Arbitration Court, consisting of two representatives of the employers and two of the employed, presided over by a Judge of the Supreme Court. The Court was to be empowered to settle all questions regarding wages, hours of labour, the employment of children and young persons, or the refusal to employ or the dismissal of any person or class of labour. It was to be empowered to arbitrate in all disputes, but it might refrain from taking action, if it thought fit, and direct that the parties should confer, so that an amicable settlement might be reached by other means. Its awards were to be enforced by heavy penalties upon unions or individuals who did not obey them, and it was to have power to direct that trade union labour should be employed in preference to non-union labour. The Bill had no chance whatever of becoming law, as its authors well understood, but its provisions are of interest as showing the desires of the Labour Party, untrammelled by any considerations of practical politics.

QUEENSLAND

The production of sugar was the only important industry in Queensland that exhibited progress during the calamitous year 1893. There was a considerable enlargement of the cane area and a more than corresponding increase in the production of sugar. Other forms of agriculture were comparatively neglected ; the grazing industry suffered from drought and the subsidiary industries were stagnant. The mining returns showed a slight increase in the quantity of gold won, but this was entirely due to the fossicking of the old fields by men sent up from the towns, who were unable to find work at their own trades. From the quartz-mines there was a diminished return, and one of the most serious results of the financial troubles was the cessation of work on nearly all the mines that had not reached the paying stage, many months elapsing before they were again opened for work.

At the close of 1893 the nominal daily wages of artisans in Brisbane were :

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Carpenters	8	4
Bricklayers	9	3
Plasterers	8	10
Painters	7	6
Blacksmiths	8	4
Navvies or common labourers	6	0

These rates had the tacit, if not the open, approval of the trade unions, and even the lowest of them was a living wage, as prices then ruled in Brisbane. Unfortunately, there was only one important building under construction in that city, and there were very few tradesmen who worked six days a week ; very few, therefore, received a living wage. The builders' labourers on the building referred to struck work in October 1893 for an increase of wages to 7s. per day. This strike was unsuccessful, and the labourers thought themselves fortunate to be able to get back to their employment, so many candidates were there for any vacant places.

The hopes and aspirations of the friends of Labour had been pitched very high during the earlier and greater part of the previous period. Lane and other prophets had promised the workers that, if they would organize and submit to the restraints of discipline, Labour would proceed from conquest to conquest, until at last "all sources of wealth and all means of producing and distributing wealth would be nationalized," and there should be a "just division among all citizens of the State of all wealth production, less only that part retained for public and common requirements." How little these aspirations had been fulfilled this narrative shows! Lane himself had given up his task in despair, and before the close of 1893 was already in Paraguay with the first detachment of New Australians, determined to realize in exile his noble dreams of the brotherhood of man.

But though Lane had left them and Labour was in a worse position than it had ever been since the establishment of the colony, the Labour leaders of Queensland, in spite of the long trade depression, the failure of the strike, and the destruction of credit, did not give up the work to which they had applied themselves. They were as firmly determined as ever to secure their ends, and in May 1893 had returned fifteen members to the Queensland Parliament. They confidently faced the future and were rejoicing, somewhat prematurely it is true, that the passing of the Village Settlements Act, which enabled the unemployed to settle on the land with the help of public money, was the beginning of a new era of remedial legislation.

Towards the close of 1893 it was rumoured that the pastoralists intended to reduce the pay of shearers from 20s. to 17s. 6d. per hundred sheep, and the Australian Workers' Union, as representing the shearers and pastoral labourers, sought to meet any such step by inviting the Pastoralists' Association to send delegates to discuss wages and other matters of common interest. About the same time the Australian Labour Federation sought to interest the pastoralists sympathetically in the wider question of

establishing a General Arbitration and Conciliation Board for the settlement of industrial disputes. The pastoralists promised to refer the question of conciliation to their Executive Council, but did nothing further, and without paying any attention to the suggestion for a Conference to discuss wages, began to introduce a new form of shearing agreement. Under this agreement the rate of pay for machine-shearing was reduced to 17s. 6d. per hundred, but in Queensland this alteration was of no great importance as only about one-tenth of the flocks were machine-shorn; in other respects there was no material change from the agreement adopted in 1891. It was probable that the new form of agreement would have been accepted without much demur if the pastoralists had met the shearers' representatives, but as their union had been ignored, the men who had gathered round the earliest shearing stations refused to accept work.

In Brisbane the representatives of the bush unions, the Australian Labour Federation and the Labour Party demanded from the Government a measure which would compel the parties to refer the dispute to arbitration, but the Government professed to see no reason for taking parliamentary action, and the strikes went on. The unionist shearers, who assembled at the stations at the beginning of shearing, refused almost unanimously to accept the new agreement, and when employment was denied them formed camps near the stations in order to turn back other labourers on their way to the sheds. Where persuasion, which was rarely of the gentle sort, failed, violence was usually resorted to, and in some instances men who signed the agreement were shot down. Most of the important sheds were picketed; this led to frequent disturbances, and many wool-sheds where non-union labour was employed were destroyed by fire.

In the Legislative Assembly Andrew Fisher moved that "the time has arrived when Parliament should take steps to prevent the recurrence of industrial disputes," and this neutral motion was accepted, the Premier seconding

it. A few days later Glassey moved, "that the Queensland Pastoralists' Association and the Australian Workers' Union should be compelled to appoint two representatives, who, with a chairman appointed by the Legislative Assembly, should form a Conciliation Committee to deal with the dispute." This proposal was not accepted as a natural sequel to Fisher's motion and was negatived. Meanwhile, the Cambridge Downs wool-shed, one of the largest sheds in the Hughenden district, had been burnt down and all the wool destroyed, and a little later the Manika and Dagworth wool-sheds. The condition of affairs in the pastoral districts was such that the Colonial Secretary declared in the Assembly that "the strike had developed into an insurrection." Some action was imperative, and on 5th September 1894 a Bill "for the Better Preservation of the Peace in the Disturbed Western District" was introduced. The passage of this measure through the Legislative Assembly aroused great bitterness. The Labour members did all in their power to obstruct it; in committee on 12th September they created such a scene that Glassey and seven others were named to the House and suspended for a week. The remainder of the Labour members protested strongly against proceeding with the Bill in the absence of so many members, but the Government persisted and the Bill passed.

Parry Okeden, who as immigration officer, organizer of the Labour Bureaus, and in other capacities had had long experience in dealing with working men, was sent to the west by the Government to enforce the provisions of the new Act. He behaved with great tact and discretion, and without making any arrests was able, at several of the camps, to induce the men to give up their arms. On 10th September the strike had ceased at Longreach, and on the 17th the men dispersed from Winton camp. On the 20th a ballot of shearers in the Hughenden district was taken and proved favourable to a continuance of the strike, but the men had no funds, and two days later they too declared the strike over. At the end of September

shearing at all the sheds either was in progress or had been completed. There was now no likelihood of the union shearers from the disbanded camps finding work to do in Queensland. Some remained inactive in the towns, some went to look for shearing in the other colonies, whilst many of them betook themselves to the Western Australian goldfields.

The failure of the shearers' strike of 1894 was far more complete than that of 1891, with which it is naturally compared. The two chief factors contributing to this failure were the greatly diminished resources of the Shearers' Union and the depressed condition of the labour market throughout Australia, which made it easy for employers to get as much non-union labour as they required. The leadership in 1894 was unquestionably inferior to that in the previous strike, with the result that the men in the camps almost from the first betook themselves to violence, thereby alienating public sympathy. The strike was rashly undertaken against the advice of the Labour leaders in Brisbane, and was badly carried out. Parry Okeden, on his return from the west in December 1894, declared that the whole trouble had been caused by a few and that the bulk of the shearers were anxious to take work. This assertion was perhaps in the main correct, but the collapse of the strike still left some irreconcilables. The Charleville branch of the Australian Workers' Union never formally declared the strike at an end, and in December 1894 it passed a resolution condemning the Longreach and Hughenden committees for having submitted to the pastoralists, and calling on the Australian Workers' Union to cast out "all waverers, imbeciles, and rail-sitters."

The irreconcilables appeared to be only a small minority, but they were able to influence the policy of the unions, as was seen at the meeting of the Australian Workers' Union held on 21st January 1895, at which representatives of all the sections were present. After a long discussion of the shearers' position, the representatives resolved

“ that it be left optional with members at each shed during the present year whether they shear under the 1894 Agreement, with labourers’ wages at Pastoralists’ Union rates; but this conference would urge upon members the desirableness of downing the 1894 Agreement, and raising the labourers’ wages to the old rate of 30s. per week. In the event of members resisting the 1894 Agreement and the present rate of wages the Australian Workers’ Union will render all possible assistance.” This resolution was only intended to irritate the pastoralists, as those who voted for it well knew that the Australian Workers’ Union had no funds to sustain a strike, and had no desire for one; consequently the shearing of 1895 passed off not only without a strike, but with hardly any local disturbances.

General employment was bad in Brisbane during the whole of the year 1894, and a large number of applications were made to the Government Labour Bureau for employment. Work was found for about 3000, the majority of the men being sent away from Brisbane to farms or stations. Early in 1895 the ordinary rates offered at the Bureau for farm labour ranged from 10s. to 15s. per week, with food and lodging, and though the 10s. wage was at first generally refused, in the end many were found willing to accept it. In April 1895 the master bootmakers decided to reduce the wages of their men by 10 per cent; when an attempt was made to enforce the reduction, the Brisbane bootmakers, numbering about 400, went out on strike. The union funds were at the time so low that the men were unable to obtain strike pay; nevertheless, the strike lasted about fourteen weeks, but the contest was hopeless, and the men were eventually obliged to seek work on their employers’ terms. In other trades reductions in wages and alterations in trade customs were very frequent, but trade unionism was now at a low ebb and these changes, however much they were resented, did not lead to strikes or organized resistance.

During 1896 gold-mining and the sugar industry were in a prosperous condition, and in the absence of labour

troubles trade generally improved, there being a distinct revival of employment in Brisbane. In that year the daily wages paid in the city were usually according to the following scale :

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Carpenters .	8	4	Painters .	7	6
Bricklayers .	9	3	Blacksmiths .	8	4
Masons .	11	2	Boilermakers .	8	4
Plasterers .	8	10	Navvies .	6	0

The improved conditions were maintained during the closing years of this period, except in the pastoral industry which suffered intensely from drought. There was, however, in spite of the drought and partly on account of it, a great expansion of the meat and tallow industries ; agriculture, which was almost entirely confined to the eastern coastal districts where the drought is never severe, increased rapidly, and gold-mining was very prosperous. The value of the exports of Queensland in 1899 reached nearly £12,000,000 ; Brisbane received great benefit from this improved trade, and men in the building industry once more became fully employed. Before the close of 1900, however, signs were not lacking that the period of prosperity was approaching an end. Organized demonstrations of the unemployed, which had ceased for some years, began again. These unemployed came largely from the western districts of the colony, where the drought still raged with bitter severity, carrying off millions of sheep and cattle. The Government steadily refused to open relief works, although it increased its public works expenditure, whereby some portion of unemployed labour was absorbed, but skilled artisans were scarcely affected by this Governmental outlay and many of them remained for considerable periods without work.

The trade unions of Queensland did not recover their strength after 1893, in spite of the efforts of the Labour leaders. The unions remained in existence and made a brave show at the annual celebrations of the eight-hours day, but their membership had dwindled and their funds

had almost disappeared. They were, therefore, in no condition to dispute terms with the employers and the strikes which occurred after 1894 were small sectional affairs, involving only single unions.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The failure of the National Bank of Australasia, which occurred on 1st May 1893, was, so far as South Australia was concerned, the culminating point of the bank crisis. The bank was a Melbourne institution, but its interests in South Australia were very large and the immediate consequences of its suspension were the temporary crippling of various important businesses, with the discharge from their employment of a considerable number of work-people, both men and women. Employment in Adelaide was already bad before the crisis began, and the bank failures in many cases turned unemployment into destitution, to relieve which the Mayor of Adelaide formed a committee of influential citizens, including most of the newly elected Labour members. This committee began at once to collect subscriptions and to relieve the urgent cases of distress, but beyond that it was unable to go.

In all employments there was a tendency to cut down wages to the minimum, and, as a rule, the men were willing to accept reductions if they could secure work. The trade leaders and the unions were opposed to the recognition of any reduction, and when the Operative Masons' and Bricklayers' Society met on 12th May 1893 to consider a proposal to accept lower wages, the scheme met with strong opposition and was not agreed to. The union rate for bricklayers was at the time 10s. a day, but it was not recognized by the masters, and many union members were very glad to accept piece-work at prices which were far from yielding this rate of pay. Although the official view was opposed to any reduction in the nominal rates, very few unions were prepared to support their members in a strike against a reduction, and wages were therefore just

as effectually lowered as if the reduction had been sanctioned. The only notable strike of the period was that of the seamen at Port Adelaide, who became involved in a shipping strike which had broken out at Melbourne and Sydney; several crews left their ships, but in each case the strikers were arrested and sent to prison for breach of contract, non-union crews being found to take their places. The strike was quite ineffectual and came to a speedy end.

The movement to reduce wages was not confined to town employment. On the stations rouseabouts and other permanent hands were offered 5s. a day without rations, which was usually accepted, although the Pastoralists' Association did not enforce this as its official rate. Shepherds engaged on yearly terms generally received £35 instead of the former rate of £40, farm hands £40 instead of £43, and qualified harvesters 20s. a week, which was a reduction of 5s. on their wages in 1892.

The hardship of reduced wages and irregular employment was alleviated to some extent by the prevalence of low prices. All the common necessities of life were cheap and rents had fallen about 30 per cent, which nearly compensated the man in constant employment for the fall in his wages.

Early in 1893 a large Labour element had been returned to the South Australian Legislative Assembly and great were the expectations of the discontented as to what these members would be able to obtain for them; on their part the Labour members brought what pressure they could reasonably exercise to obtain work for the unemployed. The Government had, however, very limited resources, and it was with difficulty that it could maintain an expenditure in 1893 equal to that of the previous year. This was a great disappointment to the unemployed, who refused to believe that the Government could not borrow in London for the purpose of public works construction, and at many of their meetings the Labour members were heartily denounced for lack of genuine interest in their

unemployed brethren. Early in January 1894 a number of Labour members saw Kingston, the Premier, and asked him to provide work for the unemployed. They had in mind the fact that during the previous session of Parliament the Legislative Council had thrown out certain Railway Bills which had been expected to provide a large amount of work, and hoped that Kingston would find means of putting these works in hand, although to do so was not strictly legal. This he refused to do; he offered, however, to give rations in return for a certain amount of stonebreaking, but this system of relief in kind with a labour test was most strongly objected to by the men and only about a dozen presented themselves to perform the task during the first week that it was open to them.

The want of success of the Labour members with Kingston greatly annoyed the unemployed, who determined to break off relations with them and conduct their agitation in their own way and through their own leaders; but this did not deter the Labour members and the trade unions from endeavouring to mitigate the effects of unemployment. The plan most in favour was the establishment of village settlements. A Village Settlement Association was formed and a site chosen for the first settlement between Renmark and Morgan on the River Murray, and the work of enrolling members and drawing up the rules of the settlement was carried on with expedition. The rules provided that the settlement should be a co-operative community, whose members were to till the soil and do all other necessary work under the direction of a committee elected from among themselves. The Government cordially supported the co-operative principle and agreed to advance money to the settlers proportionate to the improvements made by them. It was expected that these advances would not need to be large and that the communities would soon be self-supporting. Lyrup Settlement, as it was called, came into being in February 1894, but before that time two other settlements, one at Mount Remarkable and one at Waikere on the Murray, twenty miles from the

town of Morgan, had also been established, and later in the year ten others came into being.

The greatest enthusiasm was shown by the early settlers, and the Government gave them substantial aid to overcome the initial difficulties of their enterprise. By May 1894, that is in about three months, 500 men and about 1000 women and children were in the settlements, the great majority coming from Adelaide and Port Adelaide. Some of these people had a little money to put into the common stock, but most of them were without any means. There was much general interest taken in the village settlement movement, and the Association which had been formed gave aid to needy settlers and made gifts of stock, tools, clothing, and other things of great value to the committees.

The South Australian experiment was not exempt from unseemly quarrels, disputes about management, defections, and other incidents like those which marred the movement in the other colonies after the first enthusiasm wore off, but the experiment was persisted in maugre all these drawbacks. Most of the settlers had been town men, and, as was to be expected, their energies were not well applied, so that the Government intervened and appointed an expert to direct them in their work. After ten years' work six settlements remained in existence, with 84 settlers and a total population of 390. On the various settlements improvements to the value of £42,000 had been effected and a sum of £102,116 advanced by the Government by way of loan, which was a considerably larger sum than it was originally anticipated would be required. It cannot be said, therefore, that the village settlements were a real success in South Australia, but in 1894, when the experiment first took shape, it served the useful purpose of relieving Adelaide of some of its superfluous population, and fulfilled what appeared to onlookers to be the even more important function of infusing hope into discouraged minds.

The chief relief to unemployment came from emigration.

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In 1894 it seemed certain that Western Australia was on the eve of further important gold discoveries, and large numbers of men left for the west. During 1895 the local Press reported that 27,364 persons had migrated to the goldfields and that 9191 had returned; in the following year it was said that there was an excess of such emigration over immigration of 30,000, and in 1897 about 12,000. These estimates are not borne out by the official figures, but undoubtedly there was a considerable outward migration during these years, and this was continued until and beyond the end of the century.

By offering the unemployed food rations to be earned by a certain amount of stonebreaking, the Government thought it might be free of the pressure daily brought to bear upon it to open relief works. In this it was mistaken. Large numbers of men encamped in the parks and marched in procession through the city. This last was a punishable offence for which two of the unemployed leaders were arrested and brought before the Court. These men were found to be recent arrivals in the Province, and were reported to have thrown up work they had been engaged upon to become Labour agitators; the magistrate, distinguishing between political agitation, which was tolerable if not virtuous, and economic agitation, which was neither, fined the men very heavily. This action put a stop to the meetings and processions for a few months, but naturally did not cure unemployment, and in June 1894, when Parliament was in session, the unemployed again put forward their claim for work. On this occasion the men regularized their agitation by getting the Labour members to act as their intermediaries with the Government, and their representations were so far successful that several large works were begun.

At the same time, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to consider the question of unemployment, and on this committee Charleston and Adams represented the Labour Party. The report of the committee was presented some months later, and its well-

balanced recommendations, while they failed to go to the root of the question, were in general accord with the political ideas of the time. The committee asked for an immediate amendment of the laws as affecting pastoral holdings, the establishment of freezing works for the benefit of those engaged in the pastoral industry, a moderate expenditure of public money on prospecting for minerals and upon remunerative public works, the extension of the workingmen's blocks and village settlements, legislation to prevent industrial troubles, and the establishment of Labour Bureaus throughout the Province.

At the beginning of the shearing season of 1894 there was trouble between the shearers and the pastoralists, an echo of the dispute agitating the other colonies, but there was no general strike. In some sheds no attempt was made to enforce the new form of agreement drawn up by the Pastoralists' Union; in others it was accepted without demur by the shearers. There were strikes at some stations, but the strikers were replaced by non-union labour, and although there were attempts to prevent such labour reaching the stations, there were no serious outrages, the shearing being brought to a conclusion at about the same time as in other years.

The harvest of 1894-95 was poor, and the employment which it gave afforded little relief to the labour market, but as the year 1895 advanced conditions improved, especially in Adelaide, where trade had greatly benefited by orders from Western Australia; even the building trade was much better than it had been for several years. Rural industries were, however, very prejudicially affected by a return of drought conditions. The pastoralists suffered large losses of stock, and the farmers obtained less than 6,000,000 bushels of wheat from nearly 1,700,000 acres sown; and although wages were not reduced, there was great diminution in all rural employments and trades dependent upon them.

In January 1895 the Conciliation Act came into operation, having been passed in the previous December, and a

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Board of seven had to be constituted, three members to be chosen by the Employers' Union, three by the Trades and Labour Council, and a President to be appointed by the Government. Neither the Employers' Union nor the Council would make any nomination, and the whole Board was therefore nominated by the Government. During 1895 an attempt was made to apply the machinery of the Act to a dispute between the tanners and an employer who sought to reduce wages, but as the employer refused to recognize the Board or to give evidence before it the Act broke down at the first attempt to use it.

The harvest of 1895-96 was even poorer than that of the preceding year, and as the pastoralists also suffered severely from lack of rain, all rural employments were affected. As the months went by employment grew steadily worse, the drought increasing in severity. Town occupations on the other hand, in spite of the decline in the internal trade of the Province, maintained the improvement exhibited in the previous year. This was due chiefly to the important interests acquired by South Australia in Western Australia and the increase of its trade with that colony.

In February 1896 there was a strike of engineers and boilermakers at Gawler and Port Adelaide. Trade had much improved, and the men claimed a return to the old minimum of 10s. per day in place of that of 9s. then in force. Early in March some of the larger employers met at the newly built Trades Hall and arrived at an agreement under which a minimum of 10s. was conceded to most of the men; but many of these were not reinstated in their employment, and the strike was renewed. In the third week of April the President of the Board of Conciliation asked the employers to meet the men in conference, but they refused. He then announced that the men only expected the higher minimum to apply to fully competent men and that the question of competency was to be decided by the employers. This amounted to a withdrawal of the men's claims; the employers being satisfied, the strike came to an end and

the men returned to work at the old rates. In the following year the engineers again put forward their demands, and were able to obtain a minimum rate of 10s. a day, applicable to all belonging to their trade. Other trades now began to agitate for improved wages, but in few cases with success. In October 1896 the carpenters and joiners were able to raise their minimum wage from 8s. to 8s. 6d. a day; about the same time the seamen and firemen secured a slight improvement in wages and in the terms of their employment.

The harvest of 1896 proved to be the worst recorded in the annals of the Province, only 2,800,000 bushels of wheat being taken from over 1,500,000 acres sown, and there were enormous losses of live-stock. There was little work in the country districts and a large number of men came to Adelaide in search of relief, if not of employment. Few of these men were tradesmen, and their competition for work was confined to unskilled occupations, so that, notwithstanding considerable unemployment throughout the Province, the wages of skilled workers were not interfered with, nor was the amount of work available for them sensibly lessened during 1897.

The harvest of 1897-98 was poor, hardly exceeding 4,000,000 bushels, there were again large losses of live-stock, and until the drought broke up there was little employment except in town occupations and on public works. The rain came early in 1898, and an excellent harvest was assured, and this brought about an immediate improvement both in employment and wages. The ordinary daily wages paid in Adelaide during 1898 were :

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Bricklayers . . .	9	6	Cabinetmakers . .	8	0
Carpenters . . .	9	0	Plasterers . . .	9	0
Engineers . . .	10	0	Unskilled labourers	6	0
Masons . . .	9	0			

Except for unskilled labourers, these rates denote a slight increase over those of 1897. In the following year, which was one of general prosperity throughout Australia,

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there were still further increases, so that the minimum wage of mechanics ranged from 9s. to 10s. per day. There was an increase also in the wages of shearers and of harvest hands, but no general increase in those of pastoral labourers, ploughmen, and other farm hands, who were still paid the rates current in 1893.

The season of 1899 was good, and that of 1900 excellent ; the price of copper, which had risen to £60 per ton at the end of 1898, was further advanced to £77 in September 1899, and remained at about that level until after the close of 1900. Owing to the rapid development of Western Australia and renewed activity at Broken Hill, trade greatly improved, and throughout South Australia wages and the demand for labour were good, the incubus of unemployment being for a time removed from the industrial life of the Province.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The rigid policy of restricting credit adopted by the banks after the crisis of 1893 was felt seriously in Western Australia, which, having little capital of its own, found some of its growing industries crippled and many promising undertakings suspended. Population was growing fast and houses were wanted for its accommodation ; contracts for their erection were let, but the builders, for lack of credit, could not carry them out, and masons, bricklayers, and carpenters stood idly by waiting for work to commence. This unemployment in the building trades was the subject of discussion at a meeting of the Trades and Labour Council in August 1893, and the secretary was instructed to write to the newspapers in the other colonies stating the facts, so that artisans who intended to emigrate might avoid Western Australia. A few weeks later a deputation from the Council saw the Premier, and gave him a list of men out of work in Perth ; the Government was at the time employing as large a number of men as its funds would allow, and therefore could do nothing to help,

but the municipality of Perth found work for some of the unemployed in road-making, the wages given being 7s. a day.

The annual demonstration to celebrate the eight-hour day was held in Perth as usual, in October 1893, but an unattractive display and meagre attendance merely demonstrated the general indifference of the working classes to the cause of unionism. Nevertheless, the Trades and Labour Council plodded on, exhorting the unions to increase their membership, and sending out a missionary band of workers and speakers to organize the trades for which there were no unions. The work of these apostles of labour was marked by little success, not, it would seem, from any opposition to the principle of unionism, but by reason of a sort of indifferentism and a desire on the part of the newcomers to stand aside from the local unions until their own position in the new colony was decided.

The warnings of the Trades and Labour Council published in the papers of the eastern colonies had little effect in keeping back population from Western Australia. Few of the immigrants desired to remain in Perth, nearly all were for the goldfields. In vain were they warned of the lack of water on the road and the scanty supplies on the goldfields, where drinking-water was being sold at from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a gallon, when it was procurable, which was not always the case. In vain were they told that transport difficulties were making it almost impossible to get food supplies to the new fields, that at Kurnalpi tinned meat was selling at 6s. per lb. and even at higher prices, and a 50-lb. bag of flour cost £6. There was no cessation of the rush; during March 1894 the arrivals numbered 1000 a week, and the population of Coolgardie, for example, was already 10,000.

The banks' curtailment of advances had by this time almost ceased, as it was obvious that Perth would become an important city, and the building trades became very busy. Wages, which had shown a tendency to fall during the latter half of 1893, now returned to their previous

level. Conditions improved during 1895, which was a year of great and growing prosperity for Western Australia. Towards the middle of the year there was a boom in mining shares such as had never before been experienced in the colony, and increasing wealth and rapid immigration provided abundant employment. Building operations were carried out on all sides, especially in Perth, and the central parts of Fremantle were almost entirely rebuilt. Wages of all classes of labour rose rapidly and the eight-hour day became generally accepted for all manual labourers.

The year 1896 was marked by much unrest in industrial circles. The increased demand for labour had led to a rise in wages, but there was no recognized standard, in the sense of a minimum wage which should apply to all men in a particular trade. Many of the immigrants were skilled artisans from the eastern colonies, and there was a tendency to employ these "t'othersiders" in preference to local or English workmen, as being usually men of greater skill and of larger colonial experience. This preference led to considerable irregularity in wages, and to a demand for a regular minimum wage. During 1896 a second Bricklayers' Union had been formed in Perth, and its first action was to demand a minimum of 12s. per day. This was refused by the employers, and the members of the new union went on strike. The older union was not disposed to strike, and, as it included the larger part of the trade, the employers did not find themselves greatly inconvenienced. The lumpers at the port of Fremantle had more success. Owing to the large increase in trade following the extension of the activities of the Government, the important gold discoveries, and the increase in population, there was extreme pressure on all the carrying services of the colony. The business of the port was much congested, and it was very difficult to obtain labour or transport to move the goods from the wharves. Unskilled labour was in great demand, and the lumpers without difficulty secured an increase in wages from 1s. to 1s. 3d. an hour.

Early in 1897 the Carpenters' and Joiners', the Plasterers' and the Builders' Labourers' Unions, each in turn, demanded increased wages, the artisans 12s. and the labourers 10s. a day, the rise in each case being 1s. a day. Although these demands followed in quick succession, the unions concerned were not agreed upon a united course of action. In each trade there was a large non-union element, and though meetings were called to which non-unionists were invited, and an attempt made to get them to demand the new rate also, the business miscarried. No general strike in the trades concerned was ordered; indeed, the unions had no funds to support such a strike. Men who were offered the desired rate of pay worked, and those who could not obtain it gave up work, with the result, generally speaking, that the employers retained their most valuable men, to whom they were quite willing to pay the increase of wage, and the rest were thrown out of employment. The building trade was exceedingly busy, and if the employers had had to rely upon Western Australia for workmen they would have been obliged to concede the uniform rate. But this was not the case. At the time the eastern states, especially Victoria, held large reserves of skilled labour, and on these the employers drew. During February 1897 150 men were brought from Melbourne under contract to serve the Builders' and Contractors' Association for six months, the artisans receiving 11s. and the labourers 9s. per day; arrangements were also made for the importation of other workmen should they be required. In these circumstances the carpenters and joiners gave up the struggle almost immediately, going back to work, as they said, pending a final conference with the employers. The builders' labourers also gave up the strike, stating that a large majority of their men had obtained the desired increase. No conference was held, nor was it true that the majority of the labourers were paid 10s. a day. These abortive strikes showed the unions the necessity of more complete organization and of increasing their membership. As a first step towards these

ends a Building Trades Council was formed, which the existing unions agreed to join, the Council itself being affiliated to the Trades and Labour Council.

Meanwhile the Trades and Labour Council, finding it impossible, in the defective condition of Labour organization, to obtain concessions from private employers by direct attack, decided to bring pressure upon the Government to secure the introduction of the day-labour system in all Government undertakings. As a preliminary to the attainment of this end, it asked for the substitution of daily rates for piece-work, with a minimum wage of not less than the standard union rate at the time of the acceptance of a contract, the observance of the eight-hour day, and the infliction of substantial penalties for the breach of these conditions. These proposals, although urged upon the Minister of Works on many occasions, were never formally agreed to by the Government. The Council had nevertheless the satisfaction of seeing that its efforts were not fruitless, as the manner in which contracts were carried out thereafter shows that there was an understanding between the Government and its contractors in regard to wages and piece-work, which amounted to a material concession in the direction of the Council's requirements.

The Forrest Government was by no means unfriendly to the Council or to the claims of Labour. To the Council it presented a block of land in West Perth as a site for a Trades Hall. The land was not suitable for the purpose, but the offer itself was none the less an indication of good will. About the same time, September 1897, the Government brought forward a Bill giving a legal status to trade unions and benefit societies, which became law in the following year, and also one granting workmen a lien for wages upon work they had been employed upon; this was received by Parliament in a friendly way and speedily passed.

The year 1897 was marked by a very large increase in the output of gold, and it was now clear that Western Australia would be soon one of the greatest gold-producing

countries of the world. But the demand for labour on a goldfield does not grow proportionately with the production; indeed it may remain almost unaffected by it. There was now no longer the disproportion between the demand for labour and the supply that there had been in the two preceding years, and in 1898 there was an actual surplus of labour. This surplus was slight on the goldfields, but quite noticeable both at Perth and at Fremantle, where trade was feeling the effects of diminished immigration and of the excessive imports of 1896 and 1897. Unemployment became the chief topic of discussion at the Trades and Labour Council, and in June 1898 the Colonial Secretary decided to open a Labour Bureau in Perth which should be supplied with information as to the market for labour throughout the colony. The Bureau was made a permanent institution and performed a function of some value in the distribution of agricultural and unskilled labour, but it remained practically unused by skilled artisans, so that the returns of applications to the Bureau afford no clue to the real extent of unemployment. About 1150 men registered themselves at the Bureau, and work was found for one-fifth of them; the balance probably found employment for themselves by other means. During 1899 and 1900 business at the Bureau fell off considerably, and at certain times it was not more important than that of an ordinary employment office.

The men who were unemployed on the goldfields could have found work on one or other of the public works then in progress, but they preferred not to accept it, holding it to be a grievance that they were debarred from access to alluvial deposits, the working of which was their proper employment. The Gold Mining Act of 1895 gave permission to miners to go upon leases and work for alluvial gold, provided that in working they did not approach within fifty feet of the lode or seam. At the time the Act was passed it was believed that alluvial gold would always be found near the surface, and that no practical difficulty would arise through the dual claim of lease-

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holders and alluvial miners. In 1898, however, gold was found at Kalgoorlie at a depth of a hundred feet, which the Government geologist declared to be alluvial, and the miners, in asserting their right to this, came into conflict with the proprietors of the Ivanhoe Venture lease. The question was one of more than ordinary difficulty. If the claim of the miners were allowed, the tenure of leaseholds would be impaired, with the certainty of Western Australian mining shares being adversely affected in the English market; if the claim were disallowed, labour troubles must certainly be expected. Wittenoom, the acting Premier and Minister of Mines, inclined towards the leaseholders and issued an order restricting the rights of alluvial miners on leaseholds to gold found within ten feet of the surface. This decision roused the greatest indignation amongst miners of all classes, and when the Premier, Sir John Forrest, paid a visit to Kalgoorlie in March 1898, his refusal to promise the withdrawal of this regulation was followed by a riot in which he was handled severely. The regulation was rescinded by the Executive Council on 1st April 1898, but it was obvious that something must be done to satisfy the leaseholders. A Commission appointed to consider the matter advised that leaseholders should have the right to all gold deposits within their leases, but that alluvial ground should not be leased, a careful inspection being made before a lease was granted. The mining law was amended in this sense, but this did not put an end to the difficulty. The alluvial miners believed they had still the right to search for alluvial gold upon leases granted between 1895 and 1898, and some of them in asserting their rights came into conflict with the leaseholders of Hannan's Proprietary Company and the Boulder during 1899. Prosecutions led to decisions adverse to the miners, who thereafter gradually ceased to attempt to assert their claims by force, but the state of the law was a cause of grave discontent on the mining fields, and the agitation for its alteration was one of the most popular subjects of democratic harangues.

The miners from the eastern colonies, who formed the majority of workers on the goldfields, had brought their union membership with them, and for several years before the events just mentioned occurred there were branches of the Amalgamated Miners' Association on the fields, in which almost every miner was enrolled. Apart from the complaint in regard to the working of alluvial deposits, the miners had no important trade grievances at this period, and sought to use their organizations to help other workers, especially in the maintenance of goldfields' rates on Government contracts within a goldfield area. Vosper, a goldfields' representative, made a motion in the Assembly to secure this, which was lost by a narrow majority. The point at issue was of some importance as there were considerable differences between the standard rates on the goldfields and in other parts of the colony. The following statement shows the difference existing in some of the trades during 1898 and 1899; in all cases the rates are for a day of eight hours.

	South-Western District.	On the Gold- fields.
Carpenters .	10s.	12s. to 13s. 4d.
Masons . .	11s.	12s. to 13s. 4d.
Plasterers . .	11s.	13s. 4d.
Painters . .	8s. 6d.	13s. 4d.
Plumbers . .	8s. to 10s.	15s.
Wheelwrights .	10s.	13s. 4d.
General labourers	5s. to 7s. 6d.	10s.
Navvies . .	6s. to 8s.	10s.
Sawyers . .	6s. to 10s.	10s. to 13s. 4d.
Printers . .	9s.	12s. 6d.
Boilermakers .	11s.	15s.

Towards the end of February 1899 the Western Australian Steamship Owners' Association announced their decision to reduce the wages of lumpers from 1s. 3d. an hour to 1s. 1½d. and the overtime rates from 2s. an hour to 1s. 8d. This at once led to a strike by the union lumpers. The employers wished not only to lower wages, but also to rid themselves of the trade union regulations

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and obtain freedom to employ non-unionists. This latter was the real difficulty between the two parties, as the matter of the wages might easily have been adjusted. The strike lasted nearly six weeks. The strikers behaved on the whole with restraint, but there were disturbances on several occasions, when the non-unionists were roughly used. Efforts were made by the Mayor of Perth and other prominent citizens to bring about a conference, but the employers at first declined to meet the union leaders unless freedom of contract were conceded; eventually a meeting took place on 30th March 1899, when the men gave way upon the point of non-union labour as well as upon some other union regulations, and wages were fixed at the rates offered by the employers, except for coal lumpers whose wages remained unchanged. The strike was declared at an end on 5th April, but it was some time before work proceeded smoothly. The employers insisted on retaining a large number of the non-unionists whom they had taken on during the strike, and there was a great deal of ill-feeling between the two sections. Eventually the unionists came out, but were induced by outside mediators to take up their work again, it being tacitly understood that the employers would give no preference to non-unionists and generally would not press their advantage against the beaten unionists.

This was the most serious dispute of the period. In other branches of labour there was good employment, and throughout the whole colony a great revival of prosperity. There had been a big fall in the prices of gold-mining stocks during 1898; this was checked at the beginning of 1899, and in April of that year prices were higher than they had ever been. The yield of gold had vastly increased; the sudden rise in the price of wool largely benefited the pastoralists; agriculture was advancing; in short, almost everything conspired to bring advantage to the colony. The surplus labour of the preceding year was quietly absorbed and the tendency of wages to fall which had been visible in 1897 disappeared.

The unions were content with the current standard of wages and the employers were satisfied to pay them. After the conclusion of the wharf labourers' strike there were no noteworthy labour troubles, although in August 1899 relations between the employers and labourers in the timber industry were considerably strained. The industry had grown to important dimensions and trade was extended to the eastern colonies and Great Britain. In order to bring down the cost of production so as to maintain their footing in the British market, the proprietary companies attempted to coerce their men to accept lower wages ; the men met this by abandoning their work, when the employers hastily withdrew their demands and work was resumed.

The question of maintaining wages rates was very much in the minds of the trade unionists when Federation was under discussion. The leaders were, as a whole, well disposed towards the movement, but the rank and file and some of the unions were afraid that the federation of the colonies would lead to a reduction of wages to the level of those current in the eastern colonies, especially when intercolonial free trade should be established. This quaint economic prejudice did not affect the goldfield population, who enjoyed the highest wages in Australia, nor was it effective in delaying the union.

TASMANIA

The unemployment following the bank crisis became very pronounced during the latter months of 1893, and the wages of all classes of labour were reduced. Even the silver-miners at Zeehan consented to a reduction to the extent of 10 per cent, the crisis, as it happened, coinciding with a fall in the price of silver. It was thought by the majority that the depression would soon pass away, for not only had no Tasmanian bank failed, but no considerable sums of Tasmanian money were locked up in the suspended institutions. Unfortunately, unemployment continued

as grievous as ever and the problem of dealing with it became more acute during 1894, the months of privation which had passed having used up the savings of the workmen and in many instances laid bare their homes. On 5th April 1894 a large meeting of the unemployed was held at Hobart at which 335 men registered their names, of whom about 250 were labourers and the rest mechanics. Two days later, on the motion of Mulcahy, a select committee was appointed by the Assembly "for the purpose of considering the practicability of the State providing work of an immediately reproductive character for a large number of unemployed, able-bodied men." Matters were almost as bad in Launceston as in Hobart, having regard to the relative size of the cities, and meetings of the unemployed were held to demand work. The select committee did not take evidence as to the extent of unemployment, but only as to the works which could be taken in hand, and it very quickly issued an interim report giving a list of those it considered should be made available. Not all the suggestions of the committee were adopted, but the Government was able to set such of the unemployed to work as were willing to accept low rates of wages for unskilled labour.

During 1894 a committee of ladies was formed in Hobart to establish a village settlement on the lines of those already in existence in South Australia. This settlement was designed for the twofold purpose of dealing with unemployment and of fitting town workers to make a living on the land. The Government gave the committee the use of some land at Southport, and made it a small grant which was supplemented by the subscriptions of private persons. The scheme as arranged at first provided for the co-operation of all the settlers in work for the common benefit, but the results were very unsatisfactory, and in April 1895 a ballot was held amongst the settlers for allotments for their individual use and benefit. The settlers continued to do some work collectively, although their attention was given chiefly to their own allotments.

The settlement, however, did not become self-supporting, even upon this new basis. In order that the scheme might be sustained a little longer the Government gave the committee an additional grant, making £800 altogether, but in 1898 the settlement was definitely abandoned as a failure, and the land reverted to the Government. During the three and a half years of its existence, the settlement had afforded shelter for some sixty settlers, six of whom, with their families, had become self-supporting and were given opportunities to purchase the fee simple of their allotments on easy credit terms. Of the remaining settlers some had proved worthless, but the larger number only left the settlement as improving conditions enabled them to find more remunerative employment elsewhere.

Employment was at its worst during the winter of 1894, when the low price of agricultural and pastoral produce had a very depressing effect on the labour employed on the land. Mining was the only industry capable of absorbing any of the men out of work and even at the mines only a small number could be given employment. During 1895 there was, however, a perceptible improvement in the industrial situation. Demonstrations of the unemployed were still maintained, especially in Hobart, but it was no longer because there was not work available for all; it was a question of wages, as any man who really desired to work could obtain something to do, although not always at his own trade.

Emigration to Western Australia had, at the end of 1895, carried off a large part of the surplus labour, and when in the following year there was a distinct revival in trade and industry, the Government was able to declare officially that "the whole body of our effective labour is independent of State aid in the form of relief works." The copper-mines at Mount Lyell were being opened out, a railway was being built to carry the ore, and large smelting works were established, so that employment was found for a large number of men. This important development not only stopped the emigration from Tasmania, but brought

to the island a large number of miners and other labourers from Victoria, and reacted very beneficially on employment generally. The building trades, especially in the country districts, were again busy and employment in all the subsidiary industries was greatly benefited. During 1897 there was a demand from a small body of unemployed in Hobart for relief work, which the Government answered by sending all those who would go to the west coast, where there was ample employment.

These improved industrial conditions continued up to the close of the century. The copper-mines at Mount Lyell proved more valuable than all the other mineral discoveries made in Tasmania, and a population of 25,000 was settled between Strahan and Dundas, all depending for their support upon the Mount Lyell and Zeehan mines. Agriculture and the pastoral industry were doing very well; town workers were in a much improved position, and wages had returned to the level at which they stood in 1882, mechanics receiving about 10s. and labourers from 6s. to 7s. per day. There continued to be disparity in the wages paid in different districts, the trade unions being too few and too weak to enforce a standard rate, but the gradual opening of the country by roads and railways had done much to equalize rates and render fluid the labour supply of the Island.

V

FACTORY AND SHOP LEGISLATION AND THE SETTLEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

FACTORY AND SHOP LEGISLATION

IN 1870 Victoria, the only part of Australia that could pretend to any manufacturing activity, employed some 20,000 persons in its industrial establishments, and under the stimulus of a protective tariff this number was largely increased. There was, however, no corresponding provision for the accommodation of the new workers; but rather a general disregard of cleanliness, a lack of sanitation, and, in many trades, an overworking of women and children. The condition of the workshops was a matter of serious public consideration, and in 1873 Parliament passed an Act on the lines of the English Act of 1867 with the object of dealing with these abuses. The Act brought little improvement in the sanitary condition of the factories, which is understandable, as the general condition of Melbourne itself at the time was decidedly bad, and in various other ways it failed to accomplish the intentions of its framers.

The advocates of a protective system as a national policy were chagrined to find unscrupulous employers enjoying the benefit of a high protection, carrying on their business with an entire disregard of sanitation and the elementary rights of their workpeople, and thus early identifying in the public mind the principle of protection to manufacturers with the systematic oppression and exploitation of the employed. During 1882 the *Age*,

the leading advocate of protection in Australia, made an examination, through its own staff, of the Melbourne factories, and the accounts published were a vivid and fearless exposure of their evil condition. About the same time the Melbourne *Argus* sent a special reporter over the same ground, whose conclusions agreed in the main with those of the *Age* representatives. The comments of these important papers compelled the Government to action, and a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the working of the Act of 1873. This inquiry, which began in July 1883 and was completed in the following March, bore out all the more important allegations of the newspapers. The Commission had directed its inquiry largely to the question of sweating, particularly in employments where women were numerous engaged, and its report stated that "the sweating system in connexion with factories has been represented, by every witness on the subject, as one of the most serious grievances. It tends to bring down wages . . . and by converting the home into a workshop, it imperils the health of the community. The system appears to have originated in some of the employees being allowed to bring work home with them after the factory closes. A woman may have daughters to assist her . . . in time she employs apprentices . . . contracts are accepted at lower rates than prescribed by the log." The Commission also said that sweating was "found extensively in the boot and tailoring trade" and "bids fair to place the entire trade in the hands of women. . . . We emphatically condemn the system of allowing work to be done at home."

The Commission did not distinguish between sweating and home-work, and there is nothing in the evidence taken by it to show that sweating, as a system, existed in Melbourne, although a few instances of sub-contracting are mentioned. When a witness spoke of sweating he evidently referred to home-work done at lower than union rates; this was also the sense in which the term was used by Trenwith and other unionists during the bootmakers'

strike in November 1884, which was essentially a strike against home-work. The Commission in its report insisted on the imperative necessity of an amending Factory Act and particularly the extension of official supervision to places where less than ten persons were employed.

In appointing the Royal Commission the Victorian Government was really desirous of ascertaining the truth in regard to the condition of the factories and workshops, and of acting on any suggestions made for the protection of workers. The report of the Commission was shortly followed by the introduction of a comprehensive measure which became law in 1885. The new enactment followed generally the lines of the English Act of 1878. It reduced the number of persons technically required to form a factory to six, including apprentices, and made provision for ensuring cleanliness, air space, sanitation, and the requirements of decency, and for maintaining the health of the workers and their safety in life and limb. Inspectors were appointed, and the administration of the law was put in sympathetic hands; under the operation of the Act the old dilapidated and insanitary workshops disappeared, giving place to well-built, well-lit, and roomy factories. In 1893 the number of persons constituting a factory was reduced to four. The Act of 1885 dealt not only with factories but with the hours during which shops might remain open for the sale of goods, and enacted that the hours for closing shops in towns generally should be seven o'clock in the evening on five days in the week and ten o'clock on Saturday nights, but shops dealing with certain classes of food and perishable products were exempted from its operation. In order that there should be an intelligent application of the law, the various municipalities were allowed to pass by-laws permitting other classes of shops than those enumerated in the Act to remain open after the hours named, and, if they thought fit, to direct the closing of shops earlier than seven o'clock. The imposition of penalties for a breach of the law was also left to the determination of the municipal councils.

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The Victorian legislation in regard to shops and factories was in close agreement with the general sentiments of the people and was considered a necessary corollary of the system of protection of local industries, to which the colony had committed itself.

In some, if not in all of the other colonies, the need of factory and shop legislation was as urgent as in Victoria. The second colony to introduce factory legislation was South Australia. In 1892 there were about 11,500 persons, including 1850 women, employed in the factories of the Province, and already there were well-founded complaints regarding the conditions under which women and children worked. On the formation of the United Labour Party in 1891 there appeared on its first manifesto a demand for "a Workshops and Factories Act to secure adequate breathing space, to regulate and limit the hours of labour, limit the age at which young people may be employed, and to provide proper sanitary arrangements in all buildings used as workrooms and factories." To this particular demand of the Labour Party there was no opposition, public sentiment being very strong as to the need of hygienic workshops, and when the Downer Government met Parliament after the elections of 1893 a Bill for workshop and factory reform was promised. Parliament, however, gave Downer no opportunity of redeeming his promise, as a few days after it met he lost office and gave place to Kingston. The new Government was in alliance as well as in close sympathy with the Labour Party, and in its long programme of ameliorative measures the Factory Bill held a conspicuous place. This Bill defined the number of employees necessary to constitute a factory as four, it absolutely prohibited the employment of children under thirteen years of age, and of any young person (boy or girl between the ages of thirteen and sixteen years) unless medically certified as physically fit. No young person or woman, that is to say female over sixteen years of age, might be employed for more than five hours at a stretch without being given an opportunity of obtaining a

meal, nor might such be employed for more than forty-eight hours per week, except by arrangement with the factory inspector, who might permit an extension to a maximum of sixty hours. The Bill contained provisions regulating the accommodation to be provided for employees, the safeguarding of machinery, the ventilation and cleanliness of workrooms and factories, and the prevention of overcrowding. When the Bill came before Parliament there was considerable opposition from employers, and various deputations waited on the Ministers to voice their complaints, but the measure passed the Assembly with a large majority, only to be rejected by the Council. The Factory Bill was again introduced in 1894, when it was accepted by the Council and passed in practically the same form as it was received from the Assembly.

Although New South Wales had become, during the 'eighties, almost as well advanced as Victoria in the development of its factories, it was much slower taking steps for their regulation and inspection. In 1876 a Select Committee of the New South Wales Assembly was appointed to inquire into the employment of young persons "in trades . . . unsuited to their years." The committee reported that such persons were to be found employed in brickmaking, working ten hours a day, excluding meal times, and that among them were many under fourteen years of age. The committee also stated that there were boys and girls in factories working ten hours daily in an unhealthy atmosphere, and that boys of thirteen to fifteen years were employed at the collieries. The committee advised that legislation should be passed defining the age at which children should be permitted to work at paid employments, and that a certain standard of instruction should be attained before a child could be employed, or, failing that, provision should be made for the partial instruction of employed children. The Government inspection of places where children were employed was also recommended.

The Government allowed the committee's report to

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pass unnoticed, but in January 1877 Angus Cameron introduced a Bill "to regulate the employment of females in factories and workshops." The Bill proposed that the hours of work should be limited to eight in each day and that at least 500 cubic feet of space should be provided for every person employed in a factory. This was the time of the acute phase of the political struggle between Parkes and Robertson, and the year 1877 saw the going and coming of four Ministries. Parliament had little taste at any time for industrial legislation and was given little opportunity for considering legislation of any sort; it is not therefore surprising that Cameron's well-intentioned measure was not proceeded with. In 1890 a Census and Industrial Returns Act was passed, under which the Government statistician was empowered to report on the condition of factory and other employment in the colony. An exhaustive examination of the factories and workshops in all the centres of population was made during 1891 and 1892, the chief abuse found to exist being the almost uniform absence of provision for sanitation and for the preservation of decency. Though sweating was not found to any large extent, home workers were, as a rule, grossly underpaid, and large numbers of apprentices and learners were not paid at all. No immediate action followed on the reports issued by the statistician, but in 1896 a Factories and Workshops Act on the lines of the Victorian Act of 1885 was passed. This measure was in the charge of Garrard, who some ten years previously had been elected by the constituency of Balmain as a working-man candidate, and the strength of the Labour Party in Parliament, with Reid's dependence on its vote, made the production of such a measure necessary.

William Lane had published a story dealing with the hardships of industrial life in Brisbane and the urgent need for legislation. This book and Lane's other writings on the same topic had considerable effect on the public mind, and were the principal factor in inducing the Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the condition of

workshops and factories in Queensland. The Commission made its investigation in 1890, but it was not until 1896 that legislation was attempted, when a Factories Act, which closely followed that of New South Wales, was passed. Meanwhile, the Parliament of Victoria was engaged on the Act of 1885, radically altering and amending its main provisions.

Under the Victorian Factories and Shops Act of 1896, the term "factory," which had been defined by the amending Act of 1893 as a workshop where four or more persons were employed, was extended to every place in which furniture was manufactured, to every place in which Chinese were engaged in laundry work, and to all laundries where four persons were employed, excepting those carried on by charitable institutions. Ampler powers were given to inspectors of factories, who were authorized, when they found a factory or workshop in an insanitary condition, to prosecute the responsible person, the chief inspector being given power also to condemn any factory or work-room which he considered dilapidated, unsafe, or unfit for use. No portion of a factory could be used as a sleeping-place, unless such were separated from the factory by a substantial partition extending from floor to ceiling. The regulations governing the employment of children and young persons were made more stringent. No child under thirteen years of age was allowed to be employed, and no female whatsoever and no boy under sixteen years might be employed for more than ten hours in a day, or after nine o'clock at night; the original Act already provided that such persons could not be employed for more than forty-eight hours a week. In furniture factories and laundries where a Chinese was employed, work was not to begin before half-past seven o'clock in the morning, or be continued after half-past five in the afternoon, or on Saturday after two o'clock. On Sundays all work was to cease. Needless to say, this restriction of the working hours of the Chinese was dictated not by an interest in their well-being, but by a design to prevent unrestrained competition

with European labour. The provisions of the English Act of 1888 for the protection of workers against accidents were in the main adopted. All persons in charge of boilers and steam-engines were required to hold certificates of competence, and very special and extensive powers were given to the administrators of the Act to enforce cleanliness, ventilation, and sanitation. The Victorian Act of 1896 went far beyond the scope of a factories' and workshops' law. It remedied the defects in the Act of 1885 in regard to early closing and introduced most important provisions for the determination of wages. These last mentioned will be discussed at length later on. The beneficent intentions of the framers of the law of 1885 concerning the hours during which shops might remain open failed, owing to the perfunctory way in which the municipalities carried out their duties. In the amending Act of 1896 the initiative in regard to the weekly half-holiday was left with the shopkeepers, and considerable power still remained with the municipalities, but all shops except those of fishmongers, fruiterers, and eating-house keepers were to be closed for one afternoon in the week. In 1900 the law was further amended, and the working time of all males employed in shops was limited to fifty-two hours per week, carters, porters, and night-watchmen alone being excepted.

In 1897 Western Australia passed an early closing law, as did New South Wales in 1899. The New South Wales Act required the closing of shops at six o'clock in the afternoon on four days of the week, at one o'clock on one day, and at ten o'clock in the evening on another. This Act applied immediately to the metropolitan and Newcastle districts and could be extended to other municipal districts by proclamation. In 1900 an early closing law was passed in South Australia following closely that of New South Wales. In the same year the Queensland Government, recognizing the insufficiency of the factory legislation of 1896, passed a carefully framed and comprehensive Factories and Shops Act, the provisions in regard to shops being much the same as in New South Wales, but those

dealing with factories and workshops embodied the most recent legislation of Great Britain and Victoria, so far as such could be applied to the conditions of the colony. As Western Australia had passed in 1897 an Act for the regulation of factories, Tasmania was the only colony at the close of this period without legislation on the subject.

It will be seen from this review that the first steps in factory and shop legislation in Australia owe nothing to the advocacy of the Labour leaders, or to the presence in Parliament of direct Labour representatives. From 1873, when the Victorian Parliament first approached the question, to 1885, when the comprehensive Factories and Shops Act was passed, there was always a willingness, no matter what party was in power, on the part of the Government to pass measures for the amelioration of labour conditions, and the legislation of the other colonies was very much an imitation of what was done in Victoria. In South Australia there was no legislation until 1894, three years after the official demand by the Labour Party for factory legislation, but long before this Kingston had proclaimed his intention of dealing with factories. If there was no similar legislation in Queensland and Western Australia until much later, it was not that Griffith or Forrest was indifferent to the claims of Labour, but because the development of factories and workshops in these colonies was so slight that protective legislation seemed unnecessary, and even a waste of parliamentary energy. In New South Wales the case was different. The need for legislation was apparent long before the statistician's exposure of the unsavoury and dangerous conditions under which many even of the larger factories were conducted. From Parkes no ameliorative legislation could be expected. He was interested in constitutional questions mainly; large matters of public policy appealed to him, but he had a rooted dislike to meddling with the relations of employers and employed, and his last and strongest Ministry contained a majority of persons to whom the doctrine of *laissez-faire* was more or less of an obsession. Dibbs, in

spite of his warm-heartedness, was constitutionally antipathetic to Labour claims, while Reid, whose Government passed the first Factories Act, would undoubtedly have left the matter untouched, were it not that his practical dependence on Labour in Parliament made it necessary for him to bring forward some measures of a kind which his Labour supporters could claim as due to their presence in Parliament. Even so, the New South Wales Factories Act of 1896 was not viewed approvingly in Labour circles ; it was a somewhat unintelligent copy of the Victorian Act, whereas the Labour Party expected an up-to-date measure drawn up with a special regard to the conditions of the colony. When the party at last decided to get rid of Reid and install Lyne in his place, it secured an agreement for the production of a satisfactory batch of Labour measures. Lyne gave his Labour allies a measure full and pressed down in return for their support, and amongst the first Labour gains of the period was the Early Closing Act of which mention has been made. The deficiencies of the Factories Act remained unremedied, though not unnoticed ; there was so much to be gained before Federation came into being that the Labour Party preferred to write new measures on the Statute Book, leaving until a later date the improvement of gains already recorded.

It will be seen from this statement that the course of factory legislation in Australia was marked neither by originality nor intelligence ; it was in fact the offspring of factory legislation in the United Kingdom. It was not called forth by the peculiar circumstances of labour in the colonies, and in following the English model it included some matters that might have been passed over, excluding others of great importance that ought to have been included. The leaders of Labour in Australia were as a rule brought up in the United Kingdom and naturally adopted the cry of the English reformers without giving consideration to the special requirements of Australia. In proposing legislation for the consideration of their Parliaments, Australian legislators, no less than the Labour

leaders, were strongly influenced by the fact that English thought on Labour subjects had great weight with the general public of Australia. It was easier to obtain legislation such as was considered necessary in England than it would have been to have secured independent and, from the Australian standpoint, more necessary legislation. The question of sweating, as we have seen, was a case in point. When the House of Lords Committee in 1891 reported on the great evils of sweating in England, there arose immediately in Australia, especially in Victoria, an outcry against the sweating evil. Yet, in the English sense, sweating was almost non-existent in Australia, and the English outcry was used to obtain legislation which regulated home-work and prevented under-payment.

THE SETTLEMENT OF LABOUR DISPUTES

Before the great strike of 1890 the attitude of Australia towards conciliation and arbitration was vague and hesitating. The public as a whole took no continued interest in the question, although now and then disputes in the coal trade at Newcastle caused great public and private inconvenience, and brought forth a demand for some method of arranging wages and other conditions, so as to avoid a recurrence of the trouble. But the conditions did not exist which would permit the establishing of a joint controlling body for the prevention of strikes. The conditions of life, especially the migratory character of the working population and the continual recruiting of the employer class from the ranks of the employed, were unfavourable to the setting up of strong and permanent trade unions. Without such unions the establishment of Conciliation Boards was impossible, nor could strikes on a large scale take place as no body existed strong enough to carry them through. Trade unionism was confined practically to small groups of men in skilled trades, and in some of these trades there arose after 1870 joint Boards of masters and men who met to discuss

conditions of employment. These were not unsuccessful, but their scope and action were strictly limited by the fact that neither employers nor employed represented the whole trade. This moderated the demands on both sides as neither could exert any great pressure to achieve its aims.

Naturally, on the occasion of a strike there was a request on one side or the other, generally on the side of the strikers, for a conference, but there was no coherent demand for a permanent tribunal for conciliation. The first suggestion for setting up a Labour tribunal came from the side of the employers, who, without relishing the idea of arbitration or even conciliation, were yet desirous of having some means either of preventing a sudden strike or of ranging public opinion on their side in the event of such a strike occurring. There was much discussion from 1879 onwards as to how to prevent strikes. According to the popular view, strikes were usually brought about by young, unmarried, and irresponsible men,—which was more or less true,—and that if it were possible to bring the grievances of men or masters before a disinterested tribunal, the enforced delay would enable the older and more responsible workers to get a command of the situation, with the result that there would be fewer strikes. There were several schemes put forward, but it was not until 1882 that any of them reached the parliamentary stage. In that year, G. R. Dibbs introduced into the New South Wales Legislative Assembly a Bill for the establishment of a council composed of members of the Employers' Union and of the Trades and Labour Council, in which conciliation was provided for on the lines of the *Conseils de Prud'hommes* existing in France, but the Bill was received without interest and quietly shelved. There was at the time and for some years afterwards a representative committee of the building trades in New South Wales which was virtually a Board of Conciliation without any provision for arbitration ; this committee did excellent work in warding off strikes, a result due as much as any-

thing to the goodwill which the members had for one another.

In 1884 a Victorian Commission on Conciliation reported that "the most effective mode of bringing about industrial co-operation and mutual sympathy between employers and employed, thus obviating Labour conflicts in the future, is by the establishment of courts of conciliation, whose procedure and awards shall have the sanction and authority of Law." The Commission, however, pronounced strongly against arbitration as introducing into Labour questions the judgment of the "outsider usually ignorant of the questions involved."

In 1887 a scheme, based closely on English precedents, was adopted by a joint committee of the Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Employers' Union, for the setting up of a Board of Conciliation. This step is also evidence of the good feeling prevailing in Melbourne at the time between employer and employed. The work done by the Board promised to become important, but the Labour eruptions which occurred two years later prevented it from developing. An attempt to set up a similar Board in Sydney failed, as the essential element of goodwill was lacking, employers, other than those of the building trades, considering themselves in a position to cope with Labour troubles without the intervention of any outside parties. In the same year (1887) J. H. Carruthers obtained the first reading of a Trades Conciliation Bill in the New South Wales Parliament; this Bill, which provided purely voluntary machinery for bringing together the parties to a dispute, did not arouse any interest and was dropped. There were proposals of a somewhat similar nature in several of the other colonies, but nothing came of them, not even sufficient discussion to show that they had attracted public attention.

The change in the character of trade unionism which occurred at the end of the 'eighties altered all this. The most prominent unions became those of comparatively unskilled labour, the shearers, pastoral workers, and wharf

labourers. The chief weapon of these unions was the strike; their whole organization was directed towards it as the culminating point of their activities, and, owing to the nature and wide diffusion of the labour concerned, the general public became interested at once. It cannot be said that the Australian public disapproved of the strike as a weapon before it had made acquaintance with it on this new scale. On the contrary, public opinion appeared ready to endorse the strike for better conditions, just as it endorsed the English dock strike, and the new unions looked to public opinion as a powerful ally. It was the inconvenience and pecuniary loss caused by the strike of 1890 which ranged the Australian public on the side of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes. Immediately on the conclusion of the great strike every Cabinet in Australia was considering how the recurrence of such a public calamity could best be prevented. In New South Wales, Parkes at once appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of strikes. In South Australia, Kingston, Chief Secretary in the second Playford Administration, introduced, for preliminary consideration, his celebrated Bill to facilitate the settlement of Labour disputes, which was read for the first time on 12th December 1890. The Bill proposed to set up a Bureau of Labour to which was to be given cognizance of the industrial activities of the Province; provision was made for a system of registration applicable to all trade unions, and to all associations or combinations of unions; and the Governor, by proclamation, might require all existing unions, whether of employers or of employed, to register themselves under the Act, and might prohibit the formation of any new unions which did not submit to registration.

The primary end of such registration was to facilitate the appointment of Boards of Conciliation, and to render them effective. There were to be private and public Boards. Private Boards were those constituted between organizations and individuals, and empowered to make agreements for a term not exceeding five years. The public

Boards were of two kinds—local and State. The former were to have jurisdiction in particular localities and in regard to particular industries. They were to be created by licence of the Governor, at the instance of the parties interested, and consist of an equal number of representatives of employers and employed, elected annually. Over each Board there was to be a chairman who was not to be connected with any industry affected by the decisions of his Board. He was to be elected by the members and hold office until he resigned or was removed by the Board. There was to be one State Board which was to be a permanent body comprising six members, three recommended by organizations representing employers, and a like number by organizations of the employed. The president was to be appointed by the Governor and be a disinterested person.

The State Board was given power to inquire into any industrial dispute referred to it by the Minister of Industry or by agreement of the parties concerned, and it was empowered to take evidence and compel the attendance of witnesses. Penalties were laid down for failure to comply with the decisions of the Board, and lock-outs and strikes were made illegal. The Minister of Industry, who was of course a member of the Cabinet, was given charge of the administration of the law, and had power to refer any dispute to the consideration of the Board. A Conciliation Hall was to be erected to be used impartially by employers and employed.

Such in brief was Kingston's proposal. It will be seen that although voluntary arbitration was provided for, the principle of compulsion was deeply rooted in the Bill. The maritime strike had convinced Kingston of the hopelessness of the voluntary basis, but among the Conservatives and even among the trade unionists the elaborate machinery of the Bill was received with deep suspicion and the compulsory clauses with a certain feeling of alarm. Shortly after Kingston's Bill was introduced, in February 1891, the voluntary system received a con-

siderable advertisement by the adjustment of the differences between the Australian Shearers' Union and the South Australian Pastoralists' Association at a friendly conference. This achievement rather disposed both sides to the avoidance of compulsion.

The official attitude of the Trades and Labour Council was at first favourable to the principle of the Bill. Its Report for 1891 demanded the passage of a conciliation measure, and the candidates for the Legislative Council included conciliation and arbitration in their programme; on the other hand the manifesto of the United Labour Party issued about the same time contained no reference to arbitration, nor was there any reference to it in subsequent manifestoes while the Bill was under discussion. In August 1892 the Trades and Labour Council ranged itself on the side of the non-compulsionists. The Kingston Bill had been twice before Parliament and had been subjected to considerable revision, and in its report the Council declared that "the Conciliation Bill is in a less objectionable shape than when it was first introduced. The clause which provided that the Government could by proclamation compel the unions to register has been left out, but if an attempt is made to reinsert it we think the measure should be opposed. We should only support it if the measure is workable, and in any case it will require much consideration, especially as it imposes additional taxation." In discussing the Bill in the Council towards the end of 1892 Charleston, speaking from a union standpoint, declared his conviction that the Bill "would mean an iron hoop round them; would cramp them in their ideas, and would thus prevent the passage of ameliorative legislation." While saying this Charleston acknowledged that "he differed from the large body of those he was connected with," whose opinion was generally favourable to the Bill. In the same debate Charleston's fellow United Labour Party member, Kirkpatrick, supported the Bill, declaring himself in favour of "almost any Bill," although "the effect of the strike was very little lightened

by any prospect of improvement by means of conciliation and arbitration on the lines of the Bill or any other."

While the Bill was before Parliament in 1892 Chaffey Baker, who was an active member of the Federated Employers' Council, introduced a Conciliation Bill in the Legislative Council. Baker's Bill contained no provision for compulsion, and can hardly be said to have been a serious contribution to the settlement of the Labour question; it was opposed by all the Labour members with the exception of Charleston. Kingston's Bill did not pass, and became the sport of three sessions of Parliament, during the last two of which it had been taken over more or less absolutely by three Ministries. During the period of four years, given to its consideration, the Bill had been modified in some important particulars, notably by the provision that awards should not be binding upon persons who had not submitted to the Board of Conciliation responsible for them; and when the measure was finally accepted by the Council in December 1894, it was very different from what Kingston had proposed when the disastrous results of the great strike of 1890 were fresh in the recollection of the community.

The Commission appointed by Parkes gave in its Report in May 1891, which recommended the establishment of a State Board of Conciliation and Arbitration; "such an institution," the Commission thought, "would stand before the public as a mediatory influence . . . and public opinion would be adverse to those who, except for very good causes shown, refused to avail themselves of its good offices." A Bill based on the Commission's recommendation was introduced on 5th August 1891, but Parkes resigned before it could become law. The subject was taken up by his successor, Dibbs, whose Bill, introduced on 31st March 1892, became law under the promising title of the Trades Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Act. There was no provision for compulsion in the Act, and in spite of energetic work on the part of the officials it soon appeared that public opinion was not as strong and cohesive as had

been hopefully supposed, or else there was ever an infinity of admirable reasons for refusing the good offices of the Board.

The strike of 1890 had other effects besides the apprehensions into which it threw the general public. It had shown the employers that the strike, formidable as it was against their interests, was likely to inflict on the strikers far greater injury, and it showed them also that a strike was not really potent because it was widespread. Before 1890 the employers had no organization, but the great strike brought them together in a united effort to maintain their interests and in a way that had never before been possible. The strike also changed their views in regard to arbitration. Fortified by the experience gained in 1890, the employers as a body ceased to set any value on that mode of settling disputes, and it was natural for them, convinced of their ability to defeat Labour on any field, to consider that an appeal to law would be a hindrance to complete triumph.

The Labour view was less definite. Throughout the strike the cry was for an unconditional conference, and the Labour leaders considered that the Governments ought to have helped them to obtain such a conference. Not having done so, the Governments were denounced, except in the case of South Australia, as partisan, and the anger of the strikers and their supporters was greatly increased by the protection extended to free labour. For these reasons the labouring classes were little disposed to look favourably upon any Government project for preventing industrial disputes. The two classes most nearly concerned were therefore looking askance at all proposals for ensuring industrial peace; they were well aware that the fight was not over, and neither was willing to agree to any proposal that would hinder their freedom of action when the battle was resumed.

The Shearers' Strike of 1891 emphasized the results of 1890. It is true that when the struggle was going against them, the shearers declared themselves willing to submit

their claims to arbitration, but, as they required that the arbitrator should deal with questions which the employers refused to discuss, the mere inclusion of these would have been a moral victory for trade unionism.

The New South Wales Conciliation and Arbitration Act was practically a dead letter. The Broken Hill miners in 1892 and the shearers in 1894 appealed to its provisions, but the employers declined to agree to submit their case, and these two disputes were carried on as if no machinery for conciliation existed. Only two small disputes were settled under the provisions of the Act; Parliament eventually refused money for the payment of the officials, and when the term for which the Act was passed had expired, no attempt was made to renew it.

The experience of the Dibbs Arbitration Act effectually cured the Labour Party in New South Wales of any leaning it might have had to judicial voluntary conciliation. In 1894 the clamour of the shearers for a conference with the pastoralists, on the matter of a shearing agreement, fell on deaf ears so far as concerned the only persons who were material to such a conference; later in the year, when a strike had been declared and the refusal to confer was persisted in, a great protest meeting was held at the Protestant Hall, Sydney, at which it was resolved "that Parliament should be urged to press forward an amendment to the Conciliation Bill embodying a clause empowering either party to an industrial dispute to compel the attendance before the Board of the other side, to give evidence on oath, and empowering the Board to declare its award on the testimony submitted." The meeting was largely composed of sympathizers with the strikers, and it was apparent from this and other signs that the Labour Party had gone over completely to compulsion. To the leaders it seemed clear that compulsory awards need have no terrors for Labour, as there did not exist, and could not be brought into existence, the means to punish effectively any body of Labour refusing to abide by a decision against it; while, on the other hand, employers

would be under a severe penalty if they failed to comply with an award. The trade unions had a special reason also for desiring compulsory arbitration. Owing to the trade depression and the drain on their funds due to the strikes, they had declined in membership, and were almost without money and in no condition to maintain a struggle against the employers. The principle of minimum wages was being attacked, and the compulsory award of an arbitration court seemed to offer some chance of maintaining it ; there was certainly no other means of doing so.

The attitude of employers showed less definite change. Business was bad, and anything that would prevent strikes and make conditions more uniform would be welcome to the better class of employers ; but they saw no reason to suppose that the awards of any court would bind their employees, and they gravely suspected that the setting up of courts of conciliation and arbitration would engender agitation in every branch of trade.

The public maintained its old attitude. There was a widespread feeling that the financial crisis was due to industrial unrest, and it was desired that some means should be devised to bring about industrial peace. Compulsory arbitration had been suggested, very confidently, as a sure means to that end, and the public wished to see it tried.

When the resolutions of the meeting in the Protestant Hall were brought to the notice of Parliament, the Government had already declared its intention of introducing a Bill embodying the principle of compulsory reference. Reid had just accepted office, and on 27th August the President of the Australian Workers' Union had written to him pointing out that " there was need of an amendment of the Trades Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, so as to prevent a repetition of the present disastrous state of things existing between the Shearers' and the Pastoralists' Unions," and calling attention to the fact that " the employees had always been willing to submit disputes to conference and arbitration," but that " the employers

have almost invariably refused their request." Reid replied that he had already announced a Bill to amend the Trades Disputes Act "in such way that before the next clip the shearers or graziers can compel a judicial investigation by the Arbitration Court of their disputes, and if either side do not appear or nominate representatives, we propose that the President of the Court shall have power to nominate such representatives on their behalf, so that a full investigation can be conducted."

The shearers' strike terminated on the eve of the New Year, and the urgency of the agitation having died down, the promised Amendment Bill was not introduced until March 1895. Its principal provisions were the imposition of a penalty of £100 for refusal to produce relevant accounts or papers; the declaration that no award or proceeding of either a Council of Conciliation or the Council of Arbitration shall be liable to be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, or called in question by any Court of Judicature; and the imposition of penalty on any one who hindered the publication of an award. There was no penalty for failing to carry out an award. Public opinion was still relied upon in the last resource.

The Labour Party in New South Wales were favourable to compulsory arbitration and supported Reid's Bill. But the corollary of compulsory arbitration was the penalizing of strikes and lock-outs, and to this there was strong Labour opposition; hence Reid, while conceding to Labour compulsory arbitration and refraining from penalizing strikes, abstained from placing on the employers any legal obligation of carrying out an award when it was made. The Bill therefore did no more than require the parties to a dispute to meet. Few employers were willing to make even this concession to Labour, and the general attitude of their class is fitly illustrated by an extract from a criticism of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the morning after the introduction of the Bill. It is a measure "apparently designed to take the control of a man's business out of his hands whenever a critical stage is reached, and to

settle the difficulty without any regard to his wishes, his interest, or the possibility of the business being carried on"; it is "extreme and one-sided legislation calling new and highly unfair powers into existence . . . it is impossible to regard such a proposal of legislation as anything other than a further instalment of payment in support of the Labour Party."

The Bill passed the Assembly only to find that, while the opposition to the second reading numbered thirty, the Government representative alone recorded his vote in its favour in the Legislative Council. While the capitalist class had no doubt whatever as to the iniquity of the scheme, it does not appear that the workers as a whole were yet cognizant of its importance and possibilities as an instrument in the programme of betterment upon which their leaders had embarked. Nothing was heard about it at the Labour Conference of 1896, although a fighting platform was then drawn up. The obvious present stress of a big industrial conflict was required to emphasize its importance. This occurred when the Newcastle Coal Strike, the course of which has been traced elsewhere, broke out at the end of April 1896. We then find on 9th July, that Watkins, who represented Wallsend, in moving the adjournment of the Assembly for the purpose of calling attention to the "immediate necessity of the Government introducing a Bill to provide for compulsory arbitration," and demanding that Reid should reintroduce the Bill thrown out by the Council in the last Parliament, referred approvingly to the New Zealand experiment which had now been working for some two years. Reid answered, plausibly enough, that the Legislative Council would certainly not give a fresh Bill any better reception than it had given the former. On 19th July 1896 the miners' representatives present at a mass meeting of the Associated Miners' Association at Newcastle put a resolution to their constituents in favour of compulsory arbitration being at once introduced. There the matter for the time rested.

In May 1898 a deputation of mining officials and representatives, including Cook the Postmaster-General, waited on Garrard, the Minister for Labour, to ask for a reintroduction of the Bill of 1895. The Minister in his reply admitted that the permissive Acts of England and South Australia were unsuccessful, and that where alone an arbitration Act was proving a success—that is, in New Zealand—it was on a compulsory basis, and he promised to bring the matter before his colleagues as one of urgency. But the times were strenuous just then for the Reid Administration, and Federation obscured other issues. In November of the same year, during Reid's third Parliament, when the Ministry was too near its doom for it to take action, the Sydney District Trade Union Conference received a Report from a special committee, which accepted with certain amendments the Pember Reeves Act of New Zealand. It was then resolved "that the Conference affirms its confidence in compulsory conciliation and arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes, and urges upon the Government the necessity of passing such a measure before going into recess." Since the mining representatives were the backbone of the party in the Labour caucus hostile to Reid, and since we know how dear compulsory arbitration was to them especially, it is hardly incorrect to attribute his fall, of which the Neild grant was the parliamentary occasion, to the irritation caused by his failure to secure its introduction.

The Reid Government maintained its precarious existence until 14th September 1899, when Lyne came into office, having given to certain members of the Labour Party a written undertaking for the passage of particular measures, which they required as the price of the party's support. It was not, however, until after Lyne had ceased to hold office in the State Government, that Wise, Attorney-General in the succeeding Ministry, formulated and carried through Parliament an Arbitration Act, more comprehensive than that of New Zealand, and satisfying the full demands of his Labour supporters.

Whilst Kingston was endeavouring to persuade his Parliament to accept his proposals to facilitate the settlement of industrial disputes, and Dibbs was engaged on his Trades Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, the Victorian Government presented to Parliament a short Bill, which became law early in 1892, and which therefore has the distinction of being the first legislative enactment of the kind on the Statute Book of Australia. The Act did not go much farther than to permit the establishment of councils of conciliation under licence from the Crown, and did not permit an award being taken into or enforced by any court of law; its innocuousness ensured it an easy passage through Parliament, and its results were correspondingly feeble. The idea underlying the Victorian Act of 1892 was the establishment of a system of conciliation which would not involve also the setting up of a system of judicial machinery to carry it on. It was the intention of the Government, when occasion arose, after the Report of the parliamentary committee on the alleged existence of the practice known as sweating, etc., was received, to recast the factory legislation of the colony. It was a general opinion that the constant recurrence of strikes might be avoided, if the Amending Bill introduced a system by which masters and workmen could be brought together to determine by agreement the proper remuneration to be paid for various classes of factory labour. The scope of the factory legislation was therefore extended, so as to deal not only with the protection of the worker so far as sanitation, working hours, and the surroundings of the workshop were concerned, but also with the question of industrial remuneration.

The Factories and Shops Act of 1896 provided that special Boards might be appointed to fix wages and piece-work rates for persons employed either inside or outside factories in making clothing, shirts, underclothing, boots or furniture, and in breadmaking or baking. Subsequently (1900) the business of a butcher or a seller of meat, or maker of small goods, was added, and the appointment of special Boards was also authorized for any process, trade,

or business usually or frequently carried on in a factory or workroom, provided that a resolution had been passed by either House of Parliament, declaring it expedient that such a Board should be appointed. These special Boards were in effect the Councils of Conciliation under licence from the Crown contemplated by the Act of 1892. They were to consist of not less than four and not more than ten members, with a chairman, and their term of appointment was limited to two years. Half the members of a Board were to be elected by the employers as representing their interests, and half by the employees. The chairman was to be appointed by the Board itself, but he was not to be one of those elected by either party; in the event of the members not agreeing with regard to a chairman, he was to be appointed by the Government. An exception to the principle of election was made in the case of the furniture trade, in which the great majority of the workers were Chinese; in this trade the whole Board was to be appointed by the Government.

The powers of a special Board were very extensive. They included the fixing of either wage rates or payment for piece-work or both; the time at which the wage rate should cease and overtime begin, and the payment for overtime; the wages of apprentices and improvers and the proportion of such employees to skilled workmen. When a Board had fixed a minimum wage but not piece-work rates, employers were allowed to fix those rates to correspond with the daily rates, but in order to protect the workers the chief inspector of factories had the right to challenge any piece-work rate so fixed, and obtain the decision of the Wages Board in regard to it. The difficulty of old and infirm workers was met by giving to the chief inspector power to grant such persons licences to work at less than the minimum wage fixed by the Board. Agreements in contravention of the decision of a Wages Board were declared to be null and void, and an employee might sue for his wages as determined by the Board, notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary that he might have made

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with his master. No person was to be employed in a factory without wages, and the minimum was fixed at 2s. 6d. per week; no employer was permitted to charge, directly or indirectly, a premium or bonus for engaging or employing any female apprentice or improver in making articles of clothing or wearing apparel. In view of its novel and experimental character the Act was not at first made permanent. It was passed in 1896, re-enacted with some amendments in 1900, renewed until September 1902 and again to 1905, when it became, with some important changes, a permanent enactment.

The Factories and Shops Act of 1896 was the work of the Turner Government, which depended largely on the support of the Labour Party in Parliament; but a measure of the kind had long been advocated by the *Age* newspaper, whose scheme of fiscal protection demanded not alone the establishment of local industries but the protection of the workers in those industries and the payment of a living wage. While, therefore, the measure would in any case have been proposed as an essential part of the programme of the dominant fiscal school, its passage was made possible by the support of the Labour element in Parliament.

The Act was, as we have seen, applied in the first instance to six trades in which were employed the larger part of the women following industrial occupations, the intention of those responsible for it being to extend its operation gradually to other trades. The demand for such extension was to come from the employees concerned, and in the first six years of the Act some thirty-eight special Boards came into existence.

The trades first dealt with were, as a rule, poorly organized, and largely composed of women-workers, and what the trade unions could do and were doing for other trades the Wages Boards were expected to do for these. There was indeed an idea current amongst a certain class of employers, who were unfavourable to Labour demands but supporters for the time of the principle of Wages

Boards, that in the course of their evolution the Boards would of necessity supersede in fact the existing trade unions. Each Board, it was expected, would work for its own aims, and become isolated from the other trades ; the need for combined trade action would disappear, and Labour as a distinct political power would no longer exist. Matters did not fall out as was so logically anticipated. The employees did indeed work for their own peculiar ends and were so far isolated that in pressing their case it rarely occurred that they demanded pecuniary or other assistance from other trades. For such there was no necessity. In every industry, for which a special Board was set up, machinery of some kind was required to provide for its proper representation, and, quite naturally, where a union existed it took charge of the business of its trade, as it was affected by the special Board, and where there was no union, one was speedily set up.

The effect of the Factories and Shops Act was therefore greatly to strengthen the unions. One of the standing grievances of the unions had been the persistent refusal of the employers to meet their men in conference. This attitude of the employers had brought loss of prestige to the unions, and a considerable decrease in their membership, especially in times of depression. "The unions can do nothing for us," was the bitter complaint of the disappointed members, but so far as the trades working under special Boards were concerned, there was no longer any question of refusal to meet unionists. The employees' representatives on these Boards were the representatives of their unions, and the operation of the law secured for them a conference with the employers on every material point in regard to which a dispute might arise ; further than this, while an ordinary conference might terminate without a settlement being arrived at, a question brought before a special Board would be decided one way or another, if not by the elected representatives of the trade, then by the chairman, who on the disagreement of his colleagues became arbitrator.

The public at large, without going deeply into the matter, favoured the idea of the Wages Boards as conducing to the settlement of disputes in a speedy way, without the intervention of lawyers or the calling of witnesses, and with a minimum of expense. There was a general hope, if not a lively expectation, that the special Boards would act with moderation and self-restraint, and that the system would win for itself the confidence of the trading community and thus merit a wide extension.

The fierce labour disputes in Queensland led the Government to introduce a Bill for the establishment of tribunals on the lines of the *Conseils de Prud'hommes*. The Bill did not deal with industrial disputes between employers and bodies of employees, and though it became law, it was in no sense an intelligent contribution to the settlement of labour disputes.

In 1900 Western Australia passed a law setting up tribunals of conciliation and arbitration on the model of the Kingston Act. This remained practically a dead letter during the two years it remained on the Statute Book. It was repealed in February 1902, and a new measure approximating closely to the New Zealand law was passed.

Looking somewhat beyond the close of this period, in an endeavour to appreciate Australian legislation for the settlement of labour disputes, it is difficult to disentangle the results of the establishment of Wages Boards and Courts of Conciliation and Arbitration from the events which followed their creation. The new system was introduced at a time of depression and unemployment, when any change could only have been for the better. Wages rose, conditions of employment were greatly improved, and the country was freer from industrial disputes of a serious character than it had been for many years. It can hardly be denied that some of this improvement and some of this freedom came from the Boards and Courts. The operations of the Acts were investigated by disinterested persons on two occasions, separated by an interval of four years. In 1903 the South Australian Government sent commissioners to

Victoria to report on the Wages Boards, and they came to these conclusions: The Boards had raised wages and abolished strikes, sweating had disappeared, and women in the trades concerned had benefited considerably. Against these advantages the commissioners found that many persons had been thrown out of employment, a number of factories had been closed, and there was an undue limitation of juvenile labour; they also declared that there was a tendency for the minimum wage fixed by the Boards to become the maximum, and that in some trades the law was being evaded, and in others the decisions of the Boards had led to undue pressure being put on task workers. Balancing the advantages and the disadvantages the commissioners reported that the experiment was justified by its results, and as a result of their report Wages Boards were set up in South Australia. In 1907 E. J. Aves was sent to Australia by the English Government with the wider mission of investigating the operation of Conciliation and Arbitration and Wages Boards. His conclusions were much the same as those of the South Australian commissioners, though more guardedly expressed. He suggested that the machinery of the Boards and Courts might break down if it were put to the severe test of a failing labour market; nevertheless he reported in favour of the Acts, and the introduction of Wages Boards into some underpaid English industries was one of the results of his mission. As between Wages Boards and Courts of Arbitration he found that employers looked more favourably on the former, and among a certain section of the unemployed the belief in Courts of Arbitration was failing.

Little fault can be found with the conclusions of these inquirers, as it is certain that the Courts and the Wages Boards do much to smooth the relations of employers and employed, to prevent an accumulation of small grievances, and to bring about a more reasonable attitude to trade questions on both sides. But events have shown that Labour will not always accept the awards of arbitration

nor refrain from striking, and the employers only are bound by the awards. The period covered by the operation of the Arbitration Acts has been in general a time of rising prices and satisfactory trade conditions; these Acts therefore have not been put to a full test, and it has yet to be seen how arbitration will work in a period of trade depression and a failing labour market.

VI

PRICES

THE steady fall in the prices of the principal articles of Australian production, characteristic of the preceding period, continued after its close, and prices reached their lowest level in 1894 and 1895. A fall in prices is not necessarily an evil in itself, and if the price movement affect equally the productions of a country and those for which they are exchanged, the result may be economically negligible. During the critical period, however, the price movement went against Australia considerably, the fall in the price of exports, between 1890 and 1894, being 30 per cent, while that of the imports was 16 per cent only. The heavy fall during these years greatly aggravated the effects of the financial crisis, and the continued low prices, which extended to 1898, much retarded the financial recovery of the colonies after that event.

Being a debtor country, Australia was affected in a special way by the fall in prices. The interest on the greater part of its Government and municipal loans, and the earnings of the more important class of the private investments, were payable in Great Britain and had to be met out of the exports, irrespective of the fall in prices. This consideration becomes important when the borrowing operations of the colonies during the decade preceding the crisis are examined. From 1881 to 1890 about £161,000,000 sterling were borrowed by the various Governments or otherwise invested in Australia, involving the export of £8,500,000, to meet interest charges. This sum

represented more than one-fourth of the exports of the colonies when the debts were incurred, and had there been no improvement in the production of the country, the fall in prices would have increased the lien on the exports to about 40 per cent.

The price of wool had fallen considerably towards the end of the preceding period, and the new period saw no recovery. Between 1891 and 1898 it was very rare that, at the London sales, good merino fleece wool from Sydney sold in the grease for more than 8d. per lb. In 1893 prices ranged downwards from 8d. at the beginning of the year to 7d. at the December sales, and in 1894 from $6\frac{3}{4}$ d. at the beginning to 6d. at the close of the year. During 1895 the price rose from 6d. to $8\frac{1}{2}$ d., but the average for the year was less than $7\frac{1}{4}$ d. The producers were comforted in 1896 by the prospect of higher prices, as wool at the second series of sales in London reached $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb., but this was not maintained, and at the close of the year prices were less than at the beginning. Throughout 1897 the price fell away still further, touching 7d. per lb. at the middle of the year and averaging $7\frac{1}{4}$ d. for the twelve months. Prices were better in 1898, but the year's average was still below 8d. per lb., and at the closing series of the London sales the price was $7\frac{3}{4}$ d. The succeeding year (1899) was a joyous one for producers. There were six sales held in London; at the first series wool sold at an average of $8\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb., at the second $8\frac{1}{2}$ d.; thereafter prices rose rapidly, and at the final sales of the year 1s. 1d. was the average bidding. The opening series of the following year saw the price of wool lower but still satisfactory to the growers; unfortunately, at each successive sale the price fell, and from 1s. in January it dropped to 7d. in November, the average for the year being $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. The vicissitudes of prices might have been borne with equanimity if there had been an increase in production, but from 1891 onwards there was a persistent fall in the numbers of sheep and other classes of stock depastured. Sheep, for example, which numbered 106,000,000 in 1891, were not

more than 69,000,000 in 1900, and the production of wool showed an almost corresponding decline.

Taking Australia as a whole, the prices of articles of common use were very low, and the expenditure necessary to maintain a working-class family, according to the standard of comfort that had been attained, was lower than at any period in the history of the colonies. In regard to their wheat supply the colonies had been practically independent of the outside world long before this period and prices had adjusted themselves to those of the world's markets ; in two years only, 1896 and 1897, had grain to be imported. The harvest reaped at the close of 1892 was sufficient to allow of an export of about 9,000,000 bushels of wheat during the following year, and the price of flour, which was £9 : 5s. at the beginning of 1893, dropped to £8 : 7 : 6 a ton ; at this figure it remained until the approach of the new harvest. During 1894 the price of flour fell month by month in easy stages from £8 : 9 : 3 a ton in January to £6 : 17 : 6 in December. The harvest of 1894-1895 was excellent, and at the beginning of 1895 the wholesale price of best flour dropped to £6 : 12s. a ton and remained at about that figure until the end of May, when it became evident that there would be short crops in America. The price of flour at once rose to £8 : 7 : 6 a ton, and at this it remained until October. In November the price was advanced to £10 : 8s. on the expectation of a short crop in Australia, but although this proved to be incorrect, flour did not become cheaper, as prices in Europe were advancing. Flour remained at £10 : 7 : 6 a ton or thereabouts from October 1895 to November 1896 ; it was then evident that the Australian harvest would be short of the local requirements, and there were large importations of bread-stuffs chiefly from America and New Zealand. The price of flour was increased to £12 : 15s. a ton, and at this or a little less it remained until November 1897, when it fell to £11 : 14s. The harvest of 1897-1898 was very poor in South Australia and below the average in Victoria, but there was nevertheless sufficient wheat in Australia to

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allow of a slight export. Prices dropped in January 1898 to £10 : 15s. a ton and to £10 : 5s. in April, but in May and June the average was £11 : 15s. The advance was due to the high price of wheat in England and was maintained for a few months. In September 1898 there were indications that if the weather conditions continued favourable there would be a great harvest throughout Australia at the end of the year, and the price of flour fell to £8 : 10s. a ton. In the result the harvest did not prove equal to expectations, but there was a large exportable surplus, and in 1899 the price of flour dropped to an average of £6 : 18 : 6 a ton. The harvest of 1899-1900 was also good. Wheat was sold in England during 1900 at 26s. 11d. a quarter; the Australian price was therefore adjusted to this figure, and wheat was sold in the chief ports at 2s. 8d. a bushel, and flour at a little above or below £6 : 8s. a ton.

The price of bread was uniformly low throughout this period, ranging from 5½d. to 6½d. for the quartern loaf in the principal cities. There was very little co-ordination between the price of bread and of flour; when flour was selling retail at 1¾d. per lb. the loaf was 6d., and it was still 6d. when flour dropped to 1½d.; and bread was lower in 1894 and 1895 with flour sold wholesale at 7s. 6d. to 8s. per 100 lbs. than in 1899 and 1900 when it was at 6s. to 7s.

Meat of all descriptions was cheap. Beef ranged from year to year between 2½d. and 4d. per lb., being usually nearer the lower than the higher figure, and mutton averaged 2¼d. per lb., the lowest yearly average being 1¾d. in 1897-1898, and the highest 3d. in 1893. Pork was usually sold at 6½d. per lb. The consumption of bacon is not large in any of the colonies; it has not the honoured place on the breakfast-table that is given to it in England, and is rarely partaken of at any other meal. During this period the price ranged between 7d. and 8½d., the average being 7¾d. Butter had already become an important article of export when this period opened, and the whole-

sale price was governed by that current in London ; the retail price in the principal towns was 1s. 1½d. in 1893, and 11d. in 1900 ; for all the intervening years it was 1s., without any large variations either above or below the average. There was no export of cheese, and the wholesale price of loaf cheeses varied between 3½d. per lb., the average of 1897, and 5½d. in 1900. There was no change in the retail price, which was 8d. per lb. throughout the whole period. New-laid eggs were retailed at 1s. 6d. a dozen in 1893, and at 1s. 3d. in 1894 ; for the remainder of the period they were much cheaper, being 1s. a dozen from 1895 to 1898, and 11d. in 1899 and 1900. Honey was ordinarily sold in 1893 at 3½d. per lb. wholesale, and at 6d. retail ; thereafter it declined in price until in 1898 it was sold wholesale at 2¼d., and retail at 4d. The consumption of honey even at this low price was not large. Potatoes, of which the average weekly consumption was about 4 lbs. per head, were usually sold at from 20 to 25 lbs. for 1s., but in 1898 and for a few months in 1899 the price was 9s. per cwt., and in 1900 about 6s. 9d. Onions, of which there was a large consumption, ranged between 5s. 6d. and 12s. 6d. per cwt., the average price for the whole period being 8s. 6d. Other vegetables were plentiful and fairly cheap.

The annual consumption of tea in Australia averages about 7½ lbs. per inhabitant, and the price varied in each colony according to the duty. In the colonies where there was no duty the usual price was 1s. 6d. per lb., and for this price excellent tea could be obtained. The sugar ordinarily used in working-class houses throughout Australia during this period was of good white quality, and the annual consumption about 97 lbs. per inhabitant, exclusive of the quantity used in brewing. The price retail was 2½d. per lb. from 1893 to 1897, 2d. in 1898, and 2¼d. in 1899 and 1900.

Rents of all kinds continued very low after the crisis and in the large cities the difference between rents in 1891 and 1898 was about one-third. In the latter year the

weekly rents of dwellings occupied by the working classes varied between 2s. and 2s. 6d. per room; for cottages of three rooms from 6s. to 8s. was usually paid; for those with four rooms 8s. 6d. to 9s.; and for those with five rooms from 11s. to 12s. Dwellings of more than five rooms were not often occupied by labouring-class families; unless there were grown-up sons or daughters who contributed to the family earnings. In the suburban areas of the capital cities rents were somewhat lower, and in the provincial towns, except in rare cases, they were still lower. In all cases the rent quoted included all outgoings; rates, taxes, and repairs being paid by the owner.

The prices so far discussed refer to the great cities of the eastern colonies. In Western Australia prices were invariably higher and the excessive cost of living was the theme of many bitter complaints. Meat was the dearest item, and the usual price in Perth, 9d. to 10d. per lb., was more than double what was ordinarily paid in Adelaide or Sydney. Fuel of all kinds and rents were also very high. Even as late as 1897, when conditions in Western Australia were fairly settled, the prices ruling in Perth were still greatly above those of the eastern colonies. Beef sold at 8d. per lb., mutton at 7d., and pork at 1s., while in Sydney beef was 2½d. per lb., mutton 1¾d., and pork 6½d.; bread was 10d. the quartern loaf in Perth and 6d. in Sydney; cheese 11d. per lb. as compared with 8d.; butter 1s. 4d. in Perth and 1s. in Sydney; bacon 11d. as compared with 8d., and eggs 2s. 4d. a dozen as compared with 1s. Tea and sugar were about the same price in the two cities. Allowing for the quantities consumed of these and other necessary commodities, prices in Perth were almost twice as great as those in Sydney. This difference, however, did not extend to non-perishables, clothing and other articles of common use, which were only about 15 to 20 per cent in advance of Sydney prices.

At the beginning of the period the rents of ordinary working-class houses in Western Australia had risen to a very high figure, owing principally to the stoppage of

building operations consequent on the stringent money-market after the bank failures in the east. Small cottages, which had previously let for 10s. a week, could not be obtained for less than 20s. to 25s., or cottages of the better sort for less than 30s. Even at these rents it was difficult to get accommodation. During 1895 and 1896 building went on steadily, but it did not overtake the demand for houses, and many of the new arrivals were obliged to live in tents; it was this difficulty in obtaining dwellings that caused so many of the immigrants to leave their families in the eastern colonies, even after they themselves were well established in Western Australia.

After 1895 the mining population became an important element in the colony, but it is impossible to give with any certainty the current prices for articles even of ordinary consumption on the goldfields, so much did they vary from time to time and from place to place. On the more accessible fields the difficulties of transport raised prices at least 50 per cent above those of Perth; on the outlying fields they were often three or four times as large, and on all the goldfields the cost of living was enhanced considerably by the necessity of paying a high price for water, for several years 6d. per gallon being the ordinary price for drinking water.

The high cost of living on the goldfields led to the formation in 1896 of a league to demand, amongst other things, the abolition of duties upon food and agricultural produce. The import duties were undoubtedly high, but their abolition would have had less effect on prices than a slight saving on the cost of transport. In effect the league made use of the existence of high prices to promote an agitation in favour of free trade, and this tendency on the part of the goldfields population towards free trade is of interest in view of the fact that many of them were Victorians. In Perth and its neighbourhood the working-class population was becoming increasingly Protectionist in its views, and the grievances of the goldfields threatened at one time to develop into a serious agitation for separation from the old

settled districts, but the coming of Federation put an end to this and to many other minor agitations.

During 1897 the economic position in Western Australia began to show signs of great improvement. The congestion on the railways had been almost wholly relieved, and the building of dwellings was being rapidly carried on both in Perth and in the mining towns. In that year 1245 new buildings were erected in Perth, most of which were of stone or brick, and at the end of the year about 5000 others were in course of erection. The population of the colony, however, still increased faster than provision could be made for it, and the experience of Victoria during 1852 and 1853 was repeated, though on a smaller scale. The majority of the new arrivals were not in a position to pay the high rents demanded for small cottages, even if there had been cottages for them to occupy, and they found shelter in tents, canvas or calico-covered sheds, and other temporary structures. Even as late as 1901 about two-fifths of the habitations of the colony were of this description.

VII

TRADE AND BANKING AFTER THE CRISIS

NEW SOUTH WALES

THE condition of the pastoral industry was a most serious obstacle to the recovery of the colony after the bank crisis. The seasons of 1893 and 1894 were excellent, but they were followed by a serious drought which lasted with little intermission until 1900, and its ill effects were not mitigated by a rise in the price of pastoral produce. Wool touched its lowest point in 1894, and prices were low during the three succeeding years. Although there was an improvement before the period closed, the great decline in the number of sheep neutralized much of the advantage arising from higher prices. In 1893 the sheep in the colony numbered 57,000,000, in 1900 their number had fallen to 40,000,000, while in the same period the wool clip fell from 363,000,000 lbs. to 238,000,000 lbs.; other descriptions of stock were not greatly affected by the drought conditions, but except in dairying there was no progress.

The development of agriculture was already in progress at the time of the bank crisis and formed the most characteristic feature of the years which followed it. In 1893 the total area cropped was 1,010,727 acres, of which 482,921 acres were under wheat; seven years later the total area had been increased to 2,439,639 acres and the wheat area to 1,426,166 acres, but in spite of this farmers as a class enjoyed little prosperity, as unfortunately low prices

prevailed when the seasons were good, and short yields were the rule when prices were higher. During the period the character of farming noticeably improved, partly by reason of an improvement in the class of persons who took up land, many of whom were experienced farmers from Victoria and South Australia, and partly by reason of the intelligent attention given to the subject by the Government departments concerned with agriculture. Mixed farming increased, and dairying, to which a large area of the colony is well adapted, received special attention, with the result that the export of butter attained considerable proportions.

The unemployment of 1893 drove many persons to gold-fossicking, the effect of which was seen in the following year when the value of gold won reached £1,157,000. This was almost a doubling of the production, and during the remaining years of the period this improvement was well maintained. Many persons who engaged in gold-seeking because they would otherwise have remained unemployed, kept to that occupation, as it yielded them a sufficient livelihood with entire personal freedom. The output of coal also largely increased, and tin, copper, and iron mining received much more attention than formerly. The return from the silverfields was, on the other hand, greatly diminished. The price of silver in 1893 was 35½d. per oz., but the closing of the Indian mints brought the price down to 29d. in 1894. There was a slight recovery in 1895 and 1896, but in 1898 the average price was 26½d. per oz., reaching by slow recovery 28½d. in 1900. Several of the Broken Hill companies had very great trouble with their sulphide ores, and it was not until after the close of the period that the problem of their treatment was solved satisfactorily; others, on account of the large lead contents of their ores which contained little silver, found themselves hard hit by the fall in the price of lead, and several stopped working. In these circumstances the value of the products of the Broken Hill mines showed a large reduction. In 1893 the export returns gave the

yield of the mines as £3,032,000 ; in 1895 the total was £1,643,000, and this last amount was not greatly exceeded until 1899, when the value was £2,070,000, a figure still greatly below that of 1893.

As the financial crisis approached, the manufacturers of the colony greatly reduced the number of persons in their establishments, and in 1893 only 42,057 persons were employed by them as compared with 50,879 in 1891. After the crisis the condition of the manufactories greatly improved, and in 1900 the average number of persons to whom they gave work was 60,779. The bulk of this employment was given in industries of a domestic character or those called into existence by the natural resources of the country ; in the year 1900 it was estimated that 35,816 persons were employed in such industries as compared with 24,963 in industries the products of which came into competition with imported goods. The development in New South Wales was not due to any stimulus afforded by tariff protection ; it was in fact simultaneous with the removal of the duties specially imposed for protective purposes. Like the increased attention given to agriculture, it was an outcome of the crisis itself and the consequent withdrawal of support from speculation, whether in land buying, mining, or trading.

The changed condition of the colony was mirrored in its trade. In 1891 its imports for consumption were valued at about £20,500,000, which is the equivalent of £17 : 19s. per inhabitant ; in 1895 the value had fallen to £10,500,000, and the rate per inhabitant to £8 : 7s. ; this last figure marks the lowest point of trade, thereafter there was a steady increase, but the large measure of consumption shown in 1891 was not reached again. In 1894 the Free Traders under Reid came into power, and almost immediately the protective system introduced by the Dibbs Party was swept away. Sydney became practically a free port and the commercial mistress of Australia. The extent of the change is perhaps best illustrated by the growth of the re-export trade, nearly all of which was centred in

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Sydney. The following were the values of that trade in different years :

1894 . .	£4,672,712	1898 . .	£9,921,050
1896 . .	6,267,658	1900 . .	9,291,028

In 1894 the re-export trade stood to the imports for local consumption in the relation of 42 to 100, while in 1900 its relation was as 51 to 100.

The development of the exports of home production was greatly handicapped, as we have seen, first by the continuance of low prices, and secondly by the occurrence of drougthy seasons which very injuriously affected the greatest industry of the country. The effects are to be seen in the trade returns. In 1894 the value of New South Wales produce exported was £15,905,000, and in 1900 £18,873,000, the average yearly value for the whole period being about £17,500,000, which was a disappointing return, having regard to the increased energy devoted to production.

The parlous condition of the pastoral industry made the task of rehabilitating the credit of the country more than ordinarily difficult. Fortunately, so far as the banks were concerned, the position of New South Wales was better than it seemed to be during the crisis. Of thirteen banks trading in the colony it is true that eight had suspended, locking up for a time £20,000,000 deposits out of a total of £36,000,000, but one of these, the Commercial Bank of Sydney, closed its doors merely as the result of unreasoning panic and was absolutely solvent. It held larger deposits than any other bank in the colony; its returns for March 1893 showing a total of £10,383,000. The current deposits were released almost immediately, and after the first shock of suspension all depositors suffered little inconvenience, as by the end of 1894 the deposit receipts of the bank were selling at their face value with interest added. In November 1895 the bank was able to give notice of the release of all its deferred deposits. Only one other of the suspended banks had its headquarters in Sydney.

Of the rest, the headquarters of two were in Melbourne, two in Queensland, and two in London, and, naturally, the bulk of the capital of the last six was not held in New South Wales. The two Sydney banks called up additional capital amounting only to £869,806, and by the middle of 1895 the calls upon shareholders had been almost entirely paid up, while in Melbourne at the time five banks had still to receive more than £2,000,000 in capital calls. It is true that the Bank of New South Wales and the City Bank of Sydney, though they had not suspended, increased their capital, but issues made under such circumstances were of a totally different character from the issues of reconstructed banks.

The business of the Commercial Bank of Sydney was so little affected by the suspension that it paid a 10 per cent dividend at the beginning of 1894, and retained nine-tenths of its original deposits during the process of releasing them. The other Sydney bank, the Australian Joint Stock Bank, was in a very different position. It also paid dividends in 1894, but most unjustifiably, and in 1897, when the first repayment of its deferred deposits became due, it was unable to meet its undertakings. It offered to meet the sum of £950,000, then due, by paying one-half in cash and deferring the remainder for ten years, paying interest at 3 per cent. Further consideration led the bank to withdraw this proposal and ask for a modification of the accepted scheme of reconstruction: under which it had undertaken to pay its depositors interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Not only, however, had it lost large sums, but of the advances considered to be recoverable only 45 per cent were of an ordinary trade character, 35 per cent were advances on pastoral property not yielding 2 per cent, and the remainder probably returned no interest at all. In the circumstances the directors asked for an extension of the covenanted period of repayment by five years and a reduction of interest to 3 per cent. After a lengthy discussion, especially with the British depositors, this new arrangement was agreed to.

The difficulties of the Victorian and Queensland banks did not seriously affect banking in New South Wales, and it may be said that, so far as that colony was concerned, its financial disturbances were over at the end of 1897. The position of the banks had altered greatly since 1893. In March of that year their deposits amounted to £35,994,553, a year later they had fallen to £31,170,048, and, with some slight fluctuations, they continued to fall until in March 1898 they stood at £29,165,369. This was about the lowest point, and in March 1900 they stood at £32,144,463. Meanwhile a great change had taken place in the character of the deposits. In March 1893 the fixed deposits were £26,383,000 or 73·3 per cent of the total deposits, whereas in March 1900 they were £18,841,000, or only 58·6 per cent. This change, which had gone on gradually after the crisis, had both advantages and disadvantages for the banks. It reduced the interest they had to pay, as the current accounts bore none, but it compelled them to keep much larger sums in cash or at call than they had been accustomed to do.

The banks had, all through this period, some difficulty in finding suitable investments for their money, the recollection of the crisis making them extremely cautious in lending it; for safe investment, however, money was plentiful and interest low. The advances of the banks, which had amounted to £42,577,000 in March 1893, fell to about £36,000,000 in 1896; there was an increase during the following year, and in March 1897 they stood at £37,907,000. There was a further reduction in advances during the next two years, but while the reduction from 1893 to 1897 marked a readjustment of business following the bank crisis, that occurring after 1897 was largely due to a different cause, the repayment by borrowers of old loans, which the condition of industry enabled them to make. It was therefore a sign of returning prosperity, which was otherwise also clearly reflected in the balance-sheets of the banks.

After the crisis there was naturally some discussion in

regard to the desirability of altering the laws affecting banking. In June 1895 a conference of the principal banking institutions was held in Sydney to discuss some proposed legislation relating to the use of the term "bank," the form of the quarterly returns required by the Government, the regulation of the note issue and an improvement in the system of audit. The bankers made some recommendations, mainly in their own interest, omitting any provision for the safeguarding of the note-holders, depositors, or other creditors. The Government did not consider these recommendations of the bankers as a serious contribution to the settlement of the banking question and no change was made in the law, so that the banks continued to enjoy their old freedom of action in spite of the vital points of weakness which the events of 1893 laid bare.

The land and building companies did not recover from the blows given to them in 1892 and 1893. Those that survived were mostly engaged, during this period, in an endeavour to realize their properties and pay off their debts; when the century closed very few of them had resumed their normal business. The market for land did not recover and it was well-nigh impossible during the early years of the period to sell landed property; large numbers of houses and shops in Sydney were vacant, and the rents of those that were occupied fell so much that they gave a very inadequate return on the money originally invested in them. The closing years of the period saw a change for the better, in 1899 building had begun again on a small scale, and, as labour and materials were much cheaper than they had been before 1893, the lower rents gave a fair return on capital.

In addition to the great difficulties which surrounded private business of all kinds, the public finances of the colony were in a very unprosperous condition. After 1885 the revenue of the colony, in spite of the enormous land sales, had not sufficed to meet the expenditure, and in 1893 the deficit was very little short of £3,000,000. The

growth of the deficit was helped by the system of public accounts which rendered it impossible for the public to arrive at the true state of the finances, and for the Treasury itself to say how the accounts for any year stood until the votes were exhausted, which was often a matter of three or more years. The Government of which Reid was the head was the first to make an intelligent effort to balance the accounts and place Parliament in a position to control the expenditure. As a first step, the Audit Act of 1870 was amended, so that the accounts of the colony were kept in the same manner as in the other colonies, all appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund lapsing at the close of the financial year to which they referred, instead of being carried on from year to year until they were exhausted.

At the same time the tariff was revised completely, and was established upon a free trade basis. Most of the duties previously levied were abolished, excepting those upon narcotics and stimulants and certain specific duties; those on sugar, candles, oils, biscuits, confectionery, fruits, jams, jellies, and preserves were reduced gradually over a period ranging from one and a half to four and a half years before they were finally removed, in order that certain interests should not suffer and the revenue should decline gradually. This reduction in the tariff, which came into force in January 1896, was met by taxes on land and incomes. The land tax proposed was 1d. per £ on the unimproved value of freehold land, with an exemption of £240 value on all estates; with an income tax at the rate of 6d. per £ on all incomes above £200, not directly derived from the ownership, use, or occupancy of land subject to taxation.

The Government had a bitter struggle with the Legislative Council over the land and income taxes, and it was not until a General Election had been forced on the country that the Council gave way. In a second attempt to force his proposals for direct taxation through Parliament, Reid made various important concessions to his opponents

which greatly lessened the yield of the new taxes. These as adopted did not give sufficient revenue to replace the loss of the customs duties.

It is to the credit of the Government that it cut down the cost entailed by an overgrown civil service, and kept a vigilant eye on public expenditure, but the urgent need of more revenue led it in 1898 to modify its original scheme of taxation. Reid's long struggle with the Council, which represented the land and moneyed interests of the colony, had deprived him of his earlier zeal for the policy with which he had been identified, and much to the chagrin of his most earnest supporters he refrained from proposing an increase in the very light direct taxes, but turned to the customs for the revenue he required. The duties on certain articles which were to have lapsed were retained; a duty of 2d. per lb. was placed on tea, afterwards reduced to 1d. on the demand of the Labour Party, and the duty on certain kinds of dried and candied fruits was raised to 2d. per lb. The new revenue just sufficed, with rigid economy, for the needs of the country.

In 1899 Reid gave place to Lyne, whose ideas of public expenditure were of a different order, but the near approach of Federation rendered economy no longer all-important, as it was obvious that under any system of tariff taxation that the Commonwealth would adopt, New South Wales would be in possession of an abundant revenue.

VICTORIA

While the banks and other financial concerns were going through the process of reconstruction, there was observable a certain air of relief and optimism in Melbourne, but this was soon succeeded by a very different feeling. The years 1894 and 1895 were characterized by the greatest gloom. Commerce of all kinds was in a state of complete stagnation; the capital that was not locked up was unobtainable for any business enterprise, and the frequent calls upon shareholders in the reconstructed banks and

other concerns were a heavy drain upon the greatly diminished resources of the country. The situation was greatly aggravated by the low prices current for the chief articles of local production. During the next two and a half years Victoria suffered very severely from drought, which retarded its recovery, although even in 1896 and 1897 some progress is discernible. There were good rains during the latter half of 1898, and following a heavy fall in wool prices there was almost immediately a marked recovery, so that when the century closed Victoria entered the new Commonwealth with its position almost retrieved and its commerce and finance on a sounder basis than they had been for fifteen years.

After the crisis of 1893 Victoria was confronted by a threefold problem. It was necessary, first, to bring the public finances into a condition of solvency; secondly, to stimulate production, in order that there might be an increase in the exports required to meet the external obligations of the colony, which had been enormously augmented during the boom period; and, in the third place, by drastic measures to put the internal business of the country on a sound footing.

At the end of 1889 the Treasury boasted an accumulated surplus of £1,800,000; thereafter year by year the expenditure of the colony exceeded its income, and the surplus was dissipated and turned into a deficit of £2,000,000. Some attempt to reconstruct the public finances was made by the Shields Government in 1892, which was both clumsy and unsuccessful. The rates of customs duties were largely increased, but the return was smaller than under the old scale, and as the crisis of the following year brought about an immense shrinkage in imports the customs revenue of 1893-94 was even less than in 1892. An increase in the railway rates was imposed, but this was of no avail to arrest the declining revenue, and the financial ideas of the Government did not carry it any further in the direction of improving its revenue. The Patterson Ministry, which held office during 1893 and for

the first nine months of 1894, had at first no proposals for new taxation, limiting its financial measures to rigid economy and restriction of public works expenditure. By these means it continued to reduce the yearly deficit from £1,000,000 in 1892-93 to £600,000 in 1893-94; but it was evident that different and more statesmanlike measures were necessary, and that the plan of continually reducing the salaries of civil servants, leaving the railway permanent way and rolling stock unrepaired and such like "economies," was not likely to bring the finances into a proper condition. In August 1894 Downes Carter, Patterson's Treasurer, brought forward a budget which proposed radical reductions in the customs duties and the imposition of an income tax of 6d. in the £. He also proposed reductions varying from 7 to 25 per cent in the salaries of civil servants and the dismissal of a considerable number of railway servants. This budget, which was very unpopular, led to the defeat of the Government. The defeat was followed by a dissolution, and at the General Election the Opposition was returned to power, with Turner as Premier. The new Ministry immediately introduced proposals for an income tax and the taxation of unimproved land values. The income tax was accepted by Parliament, but as there was practically no market for land in the colony, the time was inopportune for the introduction of land taxation and the proposals in regard thereto were abandoned. The tariff was revised in a manner which benefited trade, though, as the Government was dependent on the support of a Protectionist Labour group, the reduction in duties was small compared with what might otherwise have been proposed. Turner kept a watchful eye upon expenditure, but with all his care it was not until 1897 that the revenue was sufficient to meet the expenses of Government.

Whilst the Government was thus reducing its expenditure to meet its diminished resources, it also, to a great extent, ceased borrowing money for public works ex-

penditure. In October 1893 the Patterson Government had been obliged to go to London to obtain money to meet a loan then about to fall due for repayment, but with that exception the Victorian Treasurers contented themselves with selling Treasury bills or issuing small local loans, the amount obtained in this way between May 1893 and the close of the period being about two and a half millions. This determined abstention from the London market had an excellent effect on Victorian credit, for though in the earlier years it would have been almost impossible to place a loan, in the last three years of the century the abstention was voluntary, as money could have been obtained without much difficulty and at a fair price.

The municipalities and other similar bodies also resorted to local loans with considerable success. The stagnation in business was so great during these years that it was undoubtedly easier to obtain these local loans than it would have been in the palmy days of 1885-91. The failures of 1893 and previous years had made it difficult for private borrowers to obtain money even on undeniably good security, and this circumstance, while it retarded good business, gave the Government and local bodies a very welcome aid in the arrangement of their affairs.

The financing of the Government during the ten years beginning with 1890 was, as we have seen, a matter of great difficulty, chiefly perhaps because the commercial vitality of the colony was for the greater part of the period too low for it to respond readily to recuperative treatment. But this is not to say that no recuperative treatment would have availed. As it happened, Victoria was extricated from its public financial difficulties without any display of first-rate financial ability. The hour brought forth no man—no Treasurer appeared with qualities of greater value than the determined parsimony and unwearying attention to details evinced by Sir George Turner. No Treasurer on the side of the Protectionist Party was free

to revise the tariff with an eye solely to revenue, and no one amongst the Free Traders could suggest any scheme which promised a really elastic revenue. The systematic neglect of vital repairs to the railways and the constant harrowing of the unfortunate civil servants were a poor exhibition of statesmanship, the one being a public danger and a false economy, and the other a direct incentive to inefficiency and perfunctory service.

Fortunately for Victoria the unintelligent appreciation of the necessities of the economic situation was confined to its politicians; the task of increasing production had been entered upon before the crisis, and was continued with redoubled energy after that event. Pastoralists, farmers, and miners made extraordinary efforts, but so far as the first two classes were concerned, their reward did not correspond with their efforts owing to the low prices prevailing in the world's markets and the persistent droughts. The harvest of 1893-94 was a very good one, the yield of wheat amounting to 15,255,000 bushels, exceeding the excellent harvest of the preceding year, and indeed every other Victorian harvest up to that time, with the exception of the extraordinary yield of 1883-1884. It was accompanied, however, by very low prices, 2s. a bushel being all that the farmers received for their wheat after paying the charges of delivery. The harvest of 1894-95 was good, though by no means equal to that of the previous year, and prices remained almost unchanged until April 1895, when they were advanced all over the world, but little to the benefit of the Victorian farmers, most of whom had then already disposed of their crops. The wheat yield of 1895-96 was only slightly above 4 bushels to the acre, and the total less than 6,000,000 bushels, which was a smaller quantity than had been harvested for eighteen years. Every description of cereal suffered; the yield of oats, barley, rye, and potatoes fell off almost as greatly as that of wheat, and in many districts the farmers did not get back their seed.

During 1896 the export of grain from Victoria over-

seas ceased; some wheat was imported from California, an event which had not occurred for over twenty years, and for the first time the duty of 1s. 9d. per bushel became effective. The wheat harvest of 1896-97 amounted to a little over 7,000,000 bushels, enough to feed the population, but again allowing no surplus for export. Prices therefore remained high and above the level of the rest of Australia, wheat in Melbourne during the greater part of the year being worth nearly 6s. a bushel. These high prices had tempted the farmers to increase their sowing, and the area under wheat in 1897-98 was 1,657,450 acres, which was one-fifth more than in the preceding year; hence, in spite of the still unfavourable weather and an average yield of only 6·4 bushels per acre, the crop amounted to 10,580,000 bushels, giving an exportable balance of over 2,000,000 bushels. The drought so long continued broke up in April 1898, and the harvest of the ensuing year was excellent, giving a return of nearly 20,000,000 bushels of wheat, of which 11,000,000 were available for export. Unfortunately for the farmers the price obtained was only 2s. 10d. for wheat delivered in Melbourne, and the gross return from the bountiful harvest of 1898-99 was less than that obtained for the comparative failure of the preceding year. Taken as a whole, therefore, the efforts of the farmers who devoted themselves to wheat-growing during this period did not add materially to the value of the exports of the colony. Dairy farmers were, however, much more successful. In 1892 Victoria was able to supply itself with butter and have a surplus of about 7,000,000 lbs. Thenceforward there was a very rapid increase, and in 1895 the export stood at nearly 26,000,000 lbs. The droughty years, 1896, 1897, and 1898, checked production, and in the last-named year only 16,000,000 lbs. were exported. With the breaking up of the drought the export at once mounted up; 1899 showed an export of 36,250,000 lbs., and 1900 37,800,000 lbs. The price of butter was not affected by this enlarged production, and the increase in the value of

output was just as satisfactory as the increase in the production.

The droughts greatly affected the pastoral industry over the larger part of Victoria, although their intensity varied very much in different districts; but all alike suffered from the persistent low price of wool. The numbers of cattle, sheep, and horses in 1894 and 1900 were returned officially at the following figures :

Year.		Horses.	Cattle.	Sheep.
1894	. .	431,547	1,833,900	13,800,943
1900	. .	392,237	1,602,384	10,841,790

For the intervening years no statistics were collected, but undoubtedly if they had been obtained, several years would have shown much lower figures than those of 1900, when the colony was already recovering from the effects of the drought. The injury to the wool industry was much greater than the number of sheep returned would appear to indicate, as the amount of Victorian-grown wool exported in 1894 was 93,000,000 lbs. as compared with 58,000,000 in 1900.

During this period the price of wool was most unsatisfactory from the point of view of the growers and extremely irregular, the average for the seven years 1894-1900 being lower than for any similar period since the industry was established. Only once was the record of low prices broken, and pastoralists congratulated themselves that good times had again returned, but after a few months prices again fell back, and the period closed with a gloomy outlook for the whole industry.

During the period 1890-1900 various economies in the production and marketing of wool had been effected by the growers, but these were a small set-off against the double loss they sustained, by the reduction in the number of sheep shorn, and in the price obtained for the wool.

The low prices for wool and stock current in 1894 turned the thoughts of the pastoralists towards the export of meat. Freezing works were built at Echuca, and the value

of the frozen meat exported, which had been £74,866 in 1893, was £127,530 in 1894 and £209,179 in 1895. During 1896-98 there was a falling off, but the value rose greatly in 1899, and in 1900 it amounted to £441,451.

Fortunately for Victoria the production of gold increased steadily during the whole of this period. It was valued at £2,867,000 in 1894, £3,418,000 in 1899, and £3,229,000 in 1900. This improvement in production was the more remarkable as a large number of Victorians, including many skilled miners, went to Western Australia. Some of the increased gold yield was due to new discoveries in Gippsland, but the old goldfields were also worked with renewed energy, and from these fields the greater part of the increase was won.

The internal trade of Victoria depended very largely, of course, upon the condition of the banks, and could not be prosperous while they were in difficulties. It was impossible for the banks to withdraw abruptly their support from the pastoralists and large traders; the same consideration was not, however, shown to the small traders and the farmers, who found themselves not only shut out from further banking accommodation, but called upon to pay off their existing obligations. The Government came to the help of the small farmers early in 1894, by authorizing the Savings Bank Commissioners to grant loans to them to the extent of half the value of their properties, interest being charged on such advances at the rate of 5 per cent per annum; this business subsequently developed into a *crédit foncier* system, with excellent results. But the difficulties of the small traders could not thus be relieved and many of them succumbed. The credit system had undoubtedly been carried to excess in Victoria, as in the other colonies, and one of the most noticeable changes brought about by the reconstruction of business after 1893 was a great restriction of credit; indeed business was very largely transacted on what was practically a cash basis.

The change in the position and circumstances of the banks during this period was enormous. The local de-

posits in the Victorian banks were returned in March 1893 at £39,379,000, and in 1900 at £29,698,000. Great as was the difference thus shown, it by no means reveals the full shrinkage in the resources of the institutions. At the beginning of 1893 the balance-sheets of the Australian banks showed that they held about 35·5 millions of British deposits not shown in the local returns, and although it is impossible to apportion this sum accurately among the colonies, as many of the banks holding large British deposits were trading in several colonies, it is certain that a large proportion, possibly one-half, was employed in Victoria. At the end of 1900 the Australian banks held only about 13·5 millions of British deposits, a shrinkage of 22 millions. The liquidation of the City of Melbourne Bank accounted for the disappearance of 3 millions; 8 millions disappeared in the reconstructions of the Bank of Victoria, the Colonial Bank, the Commercial Bank of Australia, and the National Bank of Australasia; and several millions in other banks not primarily Victorian. In some cases a portion of the deposits had been retained as capital, either, as in the case of the Commercial Bank of Australia, by its actual conversion into preference stock, or, in the case of other banks, to a much smaller extent by the acceptance of deposit receipts in payment of capital calls; but most of the money had been actually repaid to the depositors.

This great shrinkage of deposits was naturally reflected in the reduction in the advances, which dropped from £50,000,000 in March 1893 to £29,400,000 in March 1900. Between 1893 and 1896 the reduction amounted to £12,000,000, including £3,000,000 which disappeared from the returns owing to the liquidation of the Bank of Melbourne. The best part of £4,000,000 was accounted for by writing down bad debts, and by bringing the strongest pressure to bear upon the persons to whom the advances had been made. The decline in advances which occurred after 1896 was due to circumstances of a very different character. The direct effects of the crisis disappeared

during 1897 and 1898, and banking business was carried on with more confidence, and was once again on a sound footing. During 1899 the affairs of the colony greatly improved, and there was even a return of prosperity such as had not been experienced for a decade. The pastoralists were able to make substantial repayments of advances long outstanding, and the improved condition of affairs was clearly shown in the last nine months of 1900, when normal conditions were at last reached, and the banks, paying regard to the wants of their business customers and the improved demand for capital, were in a position to increase their advances to the extent of £1,200,000.

Immediately after the crisis of 1893 the Victorian banks, anxious to retain and perhaps increase their deposits, raised the rate on deposits fixed for twelve months to 5 per cent. But this was not a rate that could be maintained. Business as a whole was not remunerative, as a large amount of old advances yielded no interest whatever, and there was little demand for new advances. Even if there had been such demand very few of the banks could have responded to it. The necessity of keeping cash reserves equal to any emergency had deeply impressed itself upon the controllers of all financial institutions, and they were inclined to go to extremes in the direction of safety. With so much idle money, and in view of other expenses and unremunerative advances, it would have been necessary for the banks to charge at least 9 per cent for advances in order to keep up a 5 per cent rate for deposits, and their difficulties were increased by reason of the very low rates for money current in London. On 5th February 1894 the Victorian rates for deposits fixed for twelve months were reduced to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, on 22nd March to 4 per cent, and some four months later to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; at the same time the practice of allowing interest on money fixed for less than six months was abandoned, and on 12th October 1894 the deposit rate was further reduced to 3 per cent. This low rate continued unchanged by the majority of the banks for several years, but after April 1896 there was no

generally recognized rate for deposits, as at that time the banks broke up their association governing such matters, and thenceforward the rates at different banks varied by one-half and occasionally by 1 per cent.

Remarkable as was the decline in deposit rates during 1894, few of the banks gained a substantial advantage from it, as the change did not affect the interest payable on the deposits held under the reconstruction schemes. Its principal result was to increase the amount of deposits at call at the expense of the fixed deposits, and this process went on during the rest of the period under review. In March 1894, with a total of 34·5 millions on deposit, 23 per cent was represented by deposits at call; in December 1900, out of a total of 29·7 millions the proportion was 41 per cent.

When the insolvent banks had reconstructed themselves in 1893, practically on their own terms, they looked to a period of calm and successful working and easy competition with the institutions that had come safely through the crisis. This confidence was based on various assumptions, which in their turn depended upon the rate of interest on deposits and loans remaining high. As we have seen, the earning power of money very greatly declined after 1893, and the reconstructed banks speedily found that they could not earn the money needful to carry out the arrangements made by them with their creditors. During 1894 banking business was almost profitless, and there were again circumstantial rumours affecting the stability of several of the larger reconstructed banks, notably the Commercial Bank of Australia. Happily these rumours proved false, but in June 1895 the Colonial Bank of Australasia, the City of Melbourne Bank, the Australian Deposit and Mortgage Bank, and the Standard Bank were compelled to revise their schemes of reconstruction, lowering the rates of interest payable on deposits from 4, $4\frac{1}{2}$, and 5 per cent, at which they had been fixed by the Court, to 3 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and deferring for longer periods the time of repayment. All these institutions, except the City of

Melbourne Bank, were able to obtain the required relief, but the English and Scottish depositors in that bank declined to accept the rearrangement and on 7th August 1895 the City of Melbourne Bank closed its doors. It proved to be quite insolvent; even the sum allocated to the repayment of the holders of current accounts had disappeared, but as the ordinary depositors and the shareholders had from the first anticipated the collapse of the institution, its actual stoppage produced very little effect in business circles in Melbourne. In June 1896 the Commercial Bank of Australia revised its scheme of reconstruction, postponing the repayment of deposits, reducing the interest payable upon them, and deferring to some extent the calls upon its shareholders. This bank had been reconstructed in a hurry and had overestimated its earning capacity, as well as the value of the securities pledged with it against advances, and had made no effective provision for unrealizable assets. The shareholders of all the reconstructed banks had made an excellent response to the heavy calls upon them, and this favourably impressed depositors, who met the proposals for a revision of the reconstruction schemes in a most amicable spirit, as they did in all cases when they were convinced that repayment though deferred was reasonably safe. Other banks were able to take action in the contrary direction and release their deferred deposits. In May 1896 the National Bank of Australasia and the Bank of Victoria, each with about £5,000,000 of deferred deposits, repaid 20 per cent of such deposits in advance of the stipulated period, and finding that a large part of the money so released remained with them, they were able to release a further 20 per cent a little later in the year. By the end of 1898 both these banks had almost completed the payment of all the deposits locked up under their reconstruction schemes. Besides these two local institutions, one of the English banks, the London Bank of Australia, considerably anticipated the repayment of its deferred deposits. It had met two instalments, and the third was

due in July 1900. Instead of waiting for that date, it met this obligation on 1st January 1897, and the final payment due in 1911 was anticipated by ten years.

Before the crisis the majority of the banks had advanced large sums against non-revenue producing securities and property liable to sudden depreciation; after that event they hastened back to sound principles. They made every effort possible to reduce their advances against real estate and live-stock and substitute therefor good commercial securities; they did away with all unnecessary branches, reduced their staffs to the minimum possible numbers, remembered that small matters count as well as large, and looked less to volume than soundness in their business. To this wholesome change were added over-caution in regard to new advances and a merciless screwing-up of debtors, large and small, until the advances made were realized or showed a large margin of safety. The result of these efforts was soon apparent, and the banks, not too heavily encumbered by their pre-crisis indiscretions, were able to achieve a condition of liquidity in their assets never before realized. After the crisis the chief anxiety of the banks was to increase their holding of gold, but, under the new conditions of their working, they were able to reduce their stock of gold without weakening their position; thus at the close of 1900 the holdings of gold in the Victorian banks amounted to £7,780,000, which, in the opinion of all competent authorities, gave a perfectly safe reserve against liabilities, in spite of a great increase in the volume of current accounts and a much larger note circulation than in 1894, when the gold reserve was £8,700,000.

The financial recovery of the colony was thus fairly continuous almost from the date of the crisis itself, but it was retarded by the severe drought of 1896 and 1897, so that it was not until the latter part of 1898, when the drought had disappeared from Victoria, that the good results of the efforts of its financial guides became clearly visible. The year 1899 was one of great prosperity in which the banks

had a leading share, with the result that several of them were able to increase their dividends, and others paid dividends for the first time since 1893.

The building societies were not so successful as the banks in re-establishing themselves. They were proportionately more involved in their holdings of and advances against land improved and unimproved, and the market for this description of property did not recover during the whole period. During 1894 and 1895 the real property market was in a hopeless state. Melbourne was losing population at a very rapid rate, and the people who remained occupied fewer and smaller houses. In some of the suburbs of Melbourne whole streets of newly built houses stood empty; partially built houses fell into decay, and land which had been sold for building purposes reverted to occupation as grazing or agricultural land, so that its value was but nominal compared with the price that had been paid for it during the boom period. There was no sale for land whether vacant or improved, and rents were so reduced that they did not represent even a moderate return on the money advanced by the building societies. Some of the larger of these institutions were thus compelled to seek authority to revise their schemes of reconstruction and to reduce the interest on deferred deposits to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It was not, however, impossible, even under these conditions, to obtain money on mortgage at the comparatively cheap rate of 5 to 6 per cent, but in such cases the valuations were low and the margin of security very high.

During 1894 and 1895 no building construction was to be seen in Melbourne, but in 1896 a small amount of work of this kind was undertaken, and a few houses of a good class were erected in the more attractive suburbs, the greatly reduced prices of building materials and of labour ensuring that even at rentals then obtainable a fair interest would be reaped on the outlay. There was no great change in conditions during 1897, but in 1898 the worst was over and rents began to rise, which improved the position of holders of property, though sales continued to be rare even where

prices were greatly reduced. Money was scarce and investors were still doubtful of any substantial improvement taking place in the market for real estate. The building societies, even those that had not been obliged to reconstruct, were unable to obtain new business, and the best of them were compelled to confine their efforts to meeting the interest on their deposits. Some of the reconstructed societies, however, were able to dispose of properties which fell into their hands by resorting to the expedient of accepting in payment their own deferred deposit receipts; but even on these conditions no great amount of business could be effected. One or two of the small societies which had not suspended payment, though their business had been inactive ever since the crisis, were now able to resume business in a small way, and even pay dividends to their shareholders. Towards the close of 1898 the County of Bourke Building Society, one of the larger institutions, again entered upon active business, and a year later was able to show a profit on its operations and declare a dividend.

The prosperous year 1899 brought some improvement to the house and land market. Proprietors were convinced that a recovery in land values was in sight, and the few sales that were made were effected at prices which, though much below those current during the period of inflation, were yet a great advance upon those obtainable in any year since 1893, and were comparable with the prices obtained at the beginning of the 'eighties, before the boom set in. The dismal array of long rows of empty houses was no longer to be seen in the Melbourne suburbs, and appearances seemed to warrant the conclusion that the city was fairly on the way to recovery. The year 1900 was not so favourable as its predecessor. The hope of a speedy recovery in land values was far from being realized, and the century closed without any real return of vitality to the property market.

During the three years following the bank crisis the best of the wholesale and importing houses just contrived to

pay their way, the others went to the wall. But there was a well-marked recovery in general commerce in 1897, and this continued until the end of the period. Credit, which had been carried greatly to excess, was very much restricted after 1893, and in 1896 the *Argus* was able to declare that never before had payments been made so largely in cash, or the volume of trade bills been so restricted. There was subsequently a big increase in these, which was natural, as trade improved, but great prudence and an entire absence of speculation were the distinguishing marks of Victorian commerce until after the close of this period.

On the Melbourne Stock Exchange some signs of improvement were visible as early as 1895, a good many mining transactions being carried through both in that year and in 1896. There was a further increase of business during 1897 with some improvement in market values, and many mining companies were floated. The following year had alternating periods of activity and depression, but at certain times there was a good deal of speculative buying, especially of Western Australian shares.

Except in the case of three or at most four of the banks, there had been since the crisis an avoidance by the public of bank shares as a form of investment. This distrust virtually disappeared during 1899, when there was a considerable increase in the price of the shares of dividend-paying banks and even of those of reconstructed banks whose solvency was well established. This movement was continued after the close of the period, but the price of bank shares did not reach its old level, nor is it likely to do so.

During the last two years of the century, there was much excitement in Melbourne, almost amounting to a boom, over Queensland and Tasmanian copper-mining stocks and Western Australian mines, but there was also a steady improvement in the demand for investment stocks, and most of the business done was on a perfectly sound basis.

TRADE AND FINANCE IN QUEENSLAND AFTER THE CRISIS

When the people of Queensland had an opportunity of surveying their position free from the distortion induced by the crisis, they saw that it was decidedly better than they could reasonably have anticipated. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent stocks of the colony, which had dropped to 79 in May 1893, rose to their former price of 92 before the year was over, and the credit of the Government may be said to have been re-established. Gold-mining was remarkably prosperous, as it had been for some time; there were heavy crushings at Gympie and at Charters Towers, all previous yields being exceeded; but mining for metals other than gold showed a decline, as there was no money available for investment in any enterprise that did not promise an immediate return. The large estates of the sugar planters were in process of subdivision into small manageable areas, and these were worked on the central mill system, which was encouraged by the passing of the "Sugar Works Guarantee Act," authorizing the Government to advance money for the erection of sugar mills on the security of the lands served by them. This Act was passed in October 1893, and by the middle of the following month three companies had been formed to take advantage of it in the Mackay district. The floods, which had affected the eastern districts of the colony early in 1893, wrought much destruction to property, but at the same time greatly improved the pastures. The drought continued in the west throughout the greater part of the year, but even this was mitigated by the copious supplies of underground water obtained by boring, and much stock was kept alive that must otherwise have been lost. There was a most important development of the chilled-meat trade, and three large freezing works were established to aid its further progress; eight large boiling-down works were also erected to deal with stock not fit or available for export, and these steps restored to sheep and cattle a certain minimum value. Unfortunately for the pastoralists

the price of wool fell, and in spite of the enterprise displayed the return from the industry was disheartening, and many station-owners found themselves responsible for advances, laid out on the improvement of their properties, which often exceeded the selling value of their stations.

The season of 1894 was excellent; the wool clip was large and the flocks speedily regained condition. But the price of wool was lower than ever; store sheep became almost unsaleable, and the price of cattle was 40 per cent below that of 1891 and 1892. To these blows was added another great strike of the shearers, which, although it failed completely, added very considerably to the expenses of the pastoralists. The low prices obtained for the products of the staple industry outweighed the increased production of the year, and the general exports fell from £9,632,662 in 1893 to £8,795,559 in 1894. The imports, £4,337,400, were barely half the exports. This great disparity was an indication of Queensland's heavy burdens, and also, it was claimed, of its resolution to reduce them. So far as the Government was concerned, there was no virtue in this abstinence from borrowing, as it was impatient for the day when it could recommence its public works expenditure. Its mind was disclosed by the Governor's speech at the opening of Parliament in July 1894. After noting the improving condition of the colony and the equalization of the revenue and expenditure, the speech went on to declare "it was considered that reproductive public works might be resumed on a moderate scale." Before, however, the Government could obtain money for public works it had to provide for taking up £750,000 of debentures due at the beginning of 1896, and £1,128,000 of Treasury bills issued in 1890 and 1891 to cover revenue deficiencies. In November 1894 Parliament gave authority for the borrowing of £2,000,000 to meet these liabilities, and a loan was placed in London in April 1895. The Government was fortunate in the date of this issue. There was a strong reaction against speculative stocks and this had

very much raised the prices of "gilt-edged" securities. For the £1,250,000 of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent stock placed on the market more than five times that amount was offered, at an average price of £101 : 12 : 9.

During 1894 general business had adjusted itself to the new conditions following the dislocation caused by the crisis, and the year 1895 gave evidence of much further improvement though it can hardly be said there was a return of prosperity. In the districts dominated by Townsville, Mackay, and Rockhampton the air of business had been cheerful even in 1894, owing to the bountiful sugar crops. The following season, though below the yield of 1894, was yet excellent, and business men in the central and western districts began to prepare themselves for a period of great activity. In Brisbane there was also a throwing off of the restraints imposed by the events of 1893; no longer was there to be seen the dismal array of empty shops and houses, so noticeable in the preceding year; even the sale of small properties in the suburbs was now and again reported. The prices accepted, however, were astonishingly low. The Deposit Bank sold some five-room cottages, built on allotments with about 25 feet frontage with a depth of 175 feet, for approximately £105 each, and eight-room houses on allotments of the same depth, but with twice the frontage, for £290; the prices obtained being thus barely equal to half the cost of the erection of the buildings.

There was an important advance in the price of wool during 1895, and the export of frozen and chilled meat and of meat products was worth nearly £1,000,000; the price of sheep rose, and cattle, which in the previous year were freely sold on the stations at £1 : 10s. per head, were now worth £4. The pastoralists were further encouraged by the conviction that serious labour troubles were over for a time and, on this account, were disposed to take a cheerful view of the future. This hopefulness was, unfortunately, not universal; the drought still held the south-western district in its thrall, and the spring shearing had to be post-

poned, as many of the sheep were too weak to be shorn. Mining, in a certain sense, was prosperous; the value of gold won exceeded £2,000,000, and there was enough gold in sight to ensure larger returns in the future; but many if not most of the mines had been over-capitalized during the days of inflation and even good mines failed to give an adequate return on the money invested in them. One of the principal mining wardens in an official report declared that "much of this capital has been wasted in a shameful manner, in senseless and, I cannot help thinking, in interested expenditure." He gave examples in support of his opinion. For one mine machinery worth £20,000 was imported two years before any stone had been raised; for another £30,000 worth of new and totally useless plant had been sent from England, although ample machinery was already at the mine. "Almost everywhere there are heaps of old iron in the form of discarded or unnecessary machinery."

During 1896 and 1897 there were signs that Queensland had almost returned to normal conditions. It was in 1896 that the revelations in regard to the Queensland National Bank were made, and no better proof could be given of the changed condition of the colony since 1893 than the general indifference with which these revelations were received. The export of wool and tallow declined somewhat from the figures of 1895, owing mainly to a fall in prices, but there was an improvement in the value of stock generally which compensated for this decline; there was also a substantial improvement in the gold yield, some development in coal, tin, and other metals, and in the sugar industry and agriculture generally. During 1898 the pastoral industry again suffered severely from drought, which affected the whole of the colony beyond the coastal ranges. Sheep and cattle died in large numbers, many runs in the western districts were abandoned, and the development of the chilled-meat industry, which had been proceeding satisfactorily, was checked. In other respects the year was singularly prosperous; the output of gold

was large, there was a great revival in copper-mining, and the development in copper, silver, and lead mining in the Chillagoe district gave promise of new life to the northern parts of the colony. There was, it is true, no immediate result in the quantities of these metals won, but a great deal of employment was created and there was a general revival of business.

The drought continued during 1899 with little abatement and there were large losses of stock, especially in the western districts. Nevertheless the enormous rise in the price of wool amply compensated the pastoralists for their losses and made the season the best they had known for many years. The market for chilled and frozen meat was greatly improved, owing to a change in the system of sale. The cattle-owners now sold their meat in Queensland to the shippers and no longer had to endure the uncertainty and delay of awaiting sales in England; the new arrangement did much, by steadying prices, to encourage trade. In mining, the production exceeded that of any previous year, and in spite of the drought there was an increase in other industries, including agriculture, which, being carried on in the coastal districts, remained almost wholly unaffected. The exports from Queensland during 1899 were valued at £11,942,858, which was much larger than the figures of any previous year; indeed it was not until 1907 that this total was again reached.

During 1900 the price of wool fell almost as suddenly as it had risen, and unfortunately there was no change for the better in the weather conditions to compensate the pastoralists; indeed the drought did not break up until three years later. Cattle which had numbered 7,013,000 in 1894 were reduced to 4,078,000 in 1900, and the number of sheep dropped from 21,708,000 in 1892 and 19,588,000 in 1894 to 10,339,000 in 1900. The production of wool in 1900 was a little short of 65,000,000 lbs., a falling off of 30,000,000 lbs. compared with the previous year, and a little more than half the quantity obtained in 1892.

This, coupled with the reduction in price, was ruinous to all struggling sheep-owners. There was an increase in the area under crop, and slightly more wheat was harvested than in the previous year, but in the aggregate of production this was counterbalanced by a heavy falling off in the output of sugar. Gold-mining continued to give large returns, and would have been still better were it not that in some districts the industry was much hampered by lack of water. In other fields of production fair results were obtained, not indeed equal to those of the two preceding years, but sufficiently good to compensate those engaged in them. The year 1900 was the last of the period of qualified prosperity which began in 1896. Before the year closed the drought had deepened, and there were unmistakable signs of the approaching depression which weighed on the colony during the next two or three years. The expenditure was already in excess of the revenue, the railway earnings were declining, the deposits in the banks, which had reached their highest point in 1900 owing to the earnings of the previous year, again began to decline, and, more important than all, in spite of the immigration policy of the Government, the colony fell into the condition of most of its neighbours and ceased to be able to retain its population.

BANKING IN QUEENSLAND AFTER THE CRISIS

The settlement arrived at between the banks and the Government in June 1893 was satisfactory to neither party. The banks desired a return to the conditions existing prior to the crisis, especially in regard to the note issue, while the Government on its part claimed that the public interest demanded not only that the circulation should be based upon the public credit, but that the whole profit arising therefrom should pass to the Public Treasury. Both parties were therefore desirous to alter the settlement. The banks could do no more than seek by passive resistance to bring the arrangement into discredit, and this some of

them attempted to do, but in the condition of the Treasury the Government had an incentive to immediate action. Owing to the falling off in the demand for land the public revenue was much reduced, and there was no prospect of an immediate recovery. In ordinary circumstances the Government would have resorted to borrowing, but for the time being the issue of a loan was impracticable. The Treasurer therefore bethought himself of using the privilege of note issue, accorded to the banks, as a means of adding to his revenue. His first step was to denounce the agreement of June and demand that from 1st January 1894 the banks should pay interest on all the notes they held, irrespective of the fact that a portion was not in actual circulation. It was estimated that one-third of the notes issued to the banks was held by them in reserve as "till-money," so that the demand of the Treasurer would have turned the nominal rate of 4 per cent charged to the banks, on the unpaid value of the notes issued to them, into an actual rate of 6 per cent. This was an impossible rate, and, recognizing this, the Treasurer reduced the nominal interest to 3 per cent. About a month later the full policy of the Government was disclosed. Under the agreement of June it had received 25 per cent of the face value of the notes circulated by the banks; on 12th October the Treasurer informed the banks that they would be required to pay in cash for the balance, such payment to be spread over nine months as contemplated by the original agreement. This demand was very unpalatable, and the banks, after conferring together, asked the Treasurer to withdraw it "with a view to giving the Act a further trial." This he declined to do, but expressed willingness, "when a moiety of the Treasury notes issued to the banks has been paid, to allow the second to remain as a fixed deposit for 12 months from 1st January 1894 bearing interest at 3 per cent." The difficulty, which related chiefly to the allowance without charge of a certain proportion of the notes as "till-money," lasted for some time, until the Government, as a final concession, offered to

reduce the interest payable by the banks to 2 per cent. The three Queensland banks readily accepted this offer; indeed, they were hardly in a position to refuse any offer the Treasurer might make, but the other banks declined it. They restricted the employment of Treasury notes as much as possible, paying cheques in gold, unless a specific demand for notes was made, and the principal banks paid their indebtedness to the Treasury in full rather than submit to the terms laid down by the Government.

The majority of the banks had learnt little from the crisis, failing to see that the public, as users, were on the side of the Government and favoured a note issue free from a shadow of suspicion. The banks did not impugn the satisfactory nature and safety of the Treasury notes, but they greatly missed the old power of issue which they had enjoyed for many years and which formed a very cheap and useful means of circulation, especially in the districts remote from Brisbane; they were selfishly determined that their convenience should prevail over that of the Government and of the whole community. The Government was determined not to give way, and a sort of deadlock occurred so far as the non-local banks were concerned. The banking returns for the third quarter of 1894 showed that only £274,589 of the Treasury notes were in use, and these were all circulated by the three local banks. The recalcitrant banks continued their resistance for some time, until they discovered that the necessities of their business compelled them to assist in the circulation of the notes, when they gradually ceased from active opposition, so that at the beginning of 1895 the issue of Treasury notes amounted to £433,150, which was about £100,000 less than the average circulation before the crisis, and probably as much as the colony could absorb under the changed conditions of business and employment.

In July 1894 the Queensland National Bank paid a dividend of 3 per cent, derived, it was alleged, from profits carried forward from the previous year, and the Royal Bank paid a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Bank of North Queens-

land paid no dividend, but declared its readiness to pay all deposits under £50 and the first instalment of larger deposits, though these were not due under the reconstruction agreement until May 1896. In the following March it set free another instalment of its fixed deposits, and in September it released the remainder, thus becoming once more a free institution. Although the banks were doing very little business, and most of those that had reconstructed were earning little more than would pay the interest on their fixed deposits, the declaration of dividends by the Queensland National and the Royal Bank, with the action of the Bank of North Queensland and of other reconstructed banks in freeing the whole or part of their deposits, gave an air of ease and security to banking generally, so that it was agreed on all sides that business was likely soon to become normal.

A General Election took place in March 1896, and the programme brought forward by Nelson reflected the optimistic mind of his Government; it dealt with the construction of railways and harbours, and a revision of the tariff, with a view to reductions in duties and an increase of the free list. The election resulted in an increase of the Labour Party, but the Government's following still gave it a substantial majority in the Legislative Assembly. While the public was anticipating a happy change in general business, and the Government was planning a resumption of its policy of expansion, there occurred an event of the greatest significance, calculated to injure the Government and raise some doubts as to the financial soundness of the country.

Drury, who had been general manager of the Queensland National Bank since its foundation, had died, and his successor announced, at the annual meeting held on 30th July 1896, that no dividend would be paid, and that, as it was impracticable for the bank to meet its obligations under the reconstruction scheme, or continue to pay $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the deferred deposits, some modification of the 1893 agreement must be sought. The powers of the Queensland

Government with regard to the bank were clear, and, with some appearance of reluctance, Nelson, who was Premier and Treasurer, authorized E. B. Forrest, a member of the Legislative Council, J. Cameron and E. V. Reid, both members of the Assembly, to inspect and report on the affairs of the National Bank. To this committee, as the result of some protest, Deshon, the Auditor-General of the colony, was added. The committee was appointed on 27th August, and was urged to make its report as soon as possible, with a view to the legislation which would be necessary in order to vary the terms of the reconstruction scheme of 1893. The past history of the bank was not investigated by the committee, which confined itself to a consideration of the existing condition of affairs. The committee reported on 12th November 1896 that it had examined the advances made by the bank and the securities amounting to £7,791,693 held against them, and had found that no interest was being paid on £3,000,000, of which sum £2,435,423 represented bad debts. Deducting shareholders' funds, which amounted to £1,182,613, there remained a deficit of £1,252,810. The committee recommended that the shareholders should hand over their interest in the bank to the creditors, and in return should be released from their further liability. It also suggested that the Government should waive its preferential rights and accept the same treatment as other depositors. In order to prevent the suspension of payment which must have followed this announcement, Parliament, on the invitation of the Government, at once agreed to guarantee for one year the payment of the bank's current accounts, to an amount not exceeding £800,000. Further, on 25th November, the Government introduced the "Queensland National Bank Agreement Bill, 1896," providing for the further extension of its deposits with the bank for a period not exceeding twenty-five years. This, it was declared, was necessary in order to render possible the revised scheme of reconstruction which the Government had in view.

In February 1897 the new scheme was brought forward. It was proposed that the capital at the bank should be written down by £480,000, equal to £3 per share ; three-fourths of the deferred deposits due to the Government, amounting to £1,823,364, were to be repaid in five equal annual instalments, beginning on 1st July 1917, and were to bear interest at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent ; the remainder of the deposit was to bear no interest, and was to be repaid out of the profits of the bank or on 1st July 1921 at the latest. The general public holding deferred deposits were to receive stock carrying interest at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in satisfaction of their claims, but on the basis of 15s. of stock for every 20s. due to them ; the other 5s. was to be written off the bank's liabilities. The sum thus provisionally cancelled, which amounted to over £1,000,000 sterling, could, however, be claimed in the event of the future profits of the bank being sufficient for the purpose, but not until all the Government's claims had been satisfied. The shareholders of the bank were precluded from receiving any dividends until all the deferred liabilities had been met.

The Government brought forward its proposals on 24th November 1896, and Glassey, on behalf of the Labour Party, demanded that an investigation should be made into the past history of the bank. On this point the Labour Party had long held, and had expressed, very strong opinions. Nelson at first refused to agree to this further inquiry on the ground that he " felt a good deal of diffidence in giving a further instruction to the committee to make a longer investigation into the past history of the bank," because it was so injurious to the bank to have its affairs continually under discussion. But later on, realizing the strength of the demand for the investigation both in Parliament and in the country, the same committee was instructed in March 1897 to continue its labours, and report on the events which had led to the difficulties of the bank. This Report was completed at the beginning of September, but its presentation was withheld by the

committee, as McIlwraith, who was seriously ill in England, objected to certain portions of it appearing until he had had an opportunity of giving evidence, and the committee suggested that two of their number should be sent to England to take this evidence. This proposal was not accepted by the Government, and on 15th November 1897 Nelson, who was experiencing great pressure from the Opposition, wrote that "on a conjunct view of the whole position and . . . realizing the paramount importance of the public as compared with any other interests involved," justice would be done if the Report were presented with a supplement specifying those portions of it which were open to further inquiry. In these circumstances the Report was presented to Parliament.

The committee stated that the whole amount of ascertained and estimated losses incurred by the bank from its formation to 30th June 1896 amounted to £3,497,803, and classified the bulk of these losses as—

Commercial	£1,243,043	Mining	£773,329
Pastoral	506,059	Miscellaneous	731,830

While admitting that the pastoral losses were mainly due to the great shrinkage which had occurred in this class of securities, the committee described the other losses as due to rash, speculative, and excessive advances, and said that, in particular, the bulk of the mining losses had been incurred through the making of advances on Mount Morgan shares at "high speculative values." The bank ought not to have paid any dividends after 1889 or at latest 1890, and its dividends since its reconstruction were paid at the expense of the creditors, as the profit shown was due to sums being transferred improperly from interest and contingency accounts. The committee declared that the business of the bank had been concentrated gradually in the hands of the general manager, who had controlled its affairs autocratically, overriding the opinions of other officials, disregarding and dispensing with inspection, and consulting the directors only upon formal and unimportant matters. He had authorized enormous speculative

advances, and had received large advances himself for speculative business. The committee dealt in detail with the advances made to him and to Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and, whether these were really McIlwraith's advances as the bank books showed, or McIlwraith's and Drury's jointly, as McIlwraith himself declared, they were very discreditable. It was McIlwraith who had transferred the Queensland Government account to the bank in 1879, in which year he resigned his directorship of the bank, and for long periods between that date and 1896 he had been in control of the finances of the colony, with which the finances of the bank had been inseparably bound up.

Into the relations which had existed between the bank and the Government, the committee entered very little. It drew attention to the fact that in December 1892 the Government had borrowed £600,000 from the Bank of England to meet the interest on the public debt, payable in London, although at the time its deposits with the National Bank in London exceeded £800,000. Deshon, who, it will be remembered, was a member of the investigating committee, had, in his capacity of Auditor-General, reported to the Government and to Parliament the objections to the policy of holding large deposits in the Government bank, and had referred to the borrowing resorted to, in order not to disturb the money in the hands of the bank. His representations were unheeded, as every Ministry that attained power, from the time the Government account was placed with the National Bank, appeared equally committed to the policy of deliberately placing large sums of public money at the disposal of the bank. The extent to which the practice was carried is illustrated by a record of the average deposits maintained by the Government :

1881 . . .	£1,523,450	1888 . . .	£2,440,041
1882 . . .	1,865,734	1889 . . .	3,302,617
1883 . . .	1,530,568	1890 . . .	2,222,843
1884 . . .	1,611,461	1891 . . .	2,168,968
1885 . . .	2,149,304	1892 . . .	1,840,197
1886 . . .	2,918,791	1893 (suspension)	2,441,000
1887 . . .	2,409,446		

The final figure does not include £600,000 withdrawn on the eve of the bank's suspension.

It is instructive, in considering the relations of the bank with the Government, to remember the persons who had control of the finances of the colony during this eventful period. From January 1879 to November 1883 McIlwraith was Premier and Treasurer, and definitely established the principle of keeping the bank supplied with public money in order that it might assist in the development of the country. From November 1883 to June 1888 Griffith was in power, and during these years loans were obtained in England, largely in excess of the requirements of the public service, and the balances with the bank largely increased, mainly, it would seem, with a view to meeting the difficulties caused by the drought. In June 1888 Griffith was defeated, and McIlwraith again became Premier and Treasurer, and held these positions until November of the same year, when he arranged that Morehead, a member of the Government and a director of the National Bank, should succeed him, with Pattison, a large shareholder in the Mount Morgan mine and a member of the Government, without portfolio, as Treasurer. McIlwraith left Queensland in search of health, and on his return he again became a member of the Government and Vice-President of the Executive Council; but he did not remain long in office, as he resigned in September 1889, explaining his action in quitting the Government as due to a difference with his colleagues in regard to the loan estimates, but, according to a later statement, because he thought the Government was dominated by Mount Morgan influence. During the régime of the Morehead Ministry the Government's balances with the bank were on an average equal to twice the capital of the bank, and this is significant as it was at this time that the great boom in Mount Morgan shares was in full progress.

Pattison ceased to be Treasurer in March 1890, being succeeded by Donaldson, but he remained a member of the Government until it resigned on 7th August 1890. The

fall of Morehead was brought about by an alliance between Griffith and McIlwraith, and in the new Ministry Griffith was Premier and McIlwraith Treasurer. McIlwraith remained at the Treasury until September 1892, when he was obliged again to leave Queensland on account of his health, and Griffith did the work of Treasurer until December, when Nelson was appointed and the returned McIlwraith was Premier again, in place of Griffith who became Chief Justice.

From the middle of 1888, therefore, until the bank crisis the control of Queensland's finances was in the hands of McIlwraith, who was deeply involved with the bank; of Morehead, who was a director of the bank; of Pattison, who was a large shareholder in Mount Morgan, and who was involved with Morehead in the bank's purchases of its own shares; and of Nelson with McIlwraith as Premier, except for the short intervals when Donaldson and Griffith were occupying the position of Treasurer. During the year ending June 1889 the Government deposit averaged £3,302,617, a much larger amount than in any other year, and it was a year of extraordinary difficulty for all the banks in Australia. During the next three years the deposits were considerably smaller. They could not have been otherwise, as the money market had altered completely and the Government was no longer able to raise the money it wished to procure and so maintain its balances with the bank. It was a remarkable feature of the Government's financial operations that when it became necessary to stop public works for lack of funds, to raise money by the sale of Treasury bills, and to borrow money from the Bank of England to pay the interest due on the public debt, a transaction which occurred twice in 1892, there was still so much money on deposit.

At the end of 1892 the bank confidentially made known its inability to allow the Government to withdraw money to meet engagements at the beginning of January, yet in spite of this the Treasurer (Nelson) soon afterwards increased his deposits; to enable him to do so and to repay the Bank

of England he borrowed in February 1893, under the most adverse conditions, the sum of £1,182,000. The circumstances which made this loan necessary were certainly well known to him, and must have prepared him for the revelation of the Queensland Bank's affairs, which was made to him in June 1893, yet he and his colleague Barlow recommended the bank to the country as a "sound institution," and thus made possible the reconstruction which followed. Even after the committee appointed in 1896 had handed in its second report on the affairs of the bank, Nelson did not hesitate to say that its revelations contained nothing new to him. He declared that he had been cognisant of the overdrafts to Drury, the general manager of the bank, and to McIlwraith, under whom he was then serving, and he maintained that, these notwithstanding, he was justified in the course he took. But he neglected to explain how it was that, with his eyes open to the past misdeeds and the existing situation of the bank, he continued to place large sums of Government money at its disposal, and never took the precaution, which had been provided by law, of securing a proper inspection of its affairs.

On 24th November 1897 Glassey moved in the Legislative Assembly that "in view of the disclosures contained in the report of the committee appointed to investigate the affairs of the Queensland National Bank, no Government of which Sir T. McIlwraith, Sir H. Nelson, or the Hon. A. H. Barlow are members can have the confidence of this House." The debate lasted for two days, and early in the morning of the 26th the House rejected the motion by 42 votes to 22, and passed instead a motion declaring that the House, "while retaining its confidence in the Right Hon. Sir H. Nelson and the Hon. A. H. Barlow, desires to record its opinion that, pending further inquiry into Sir T. McIlwraith's relations with the Queensland National Bank and its late general manager, it is not desirable that Sir T. McIlwraith should continue to be a member of the Executive Council." The voting was of a purely party

character, and the fact that a defeat of the Government would have left the House without a leader may have influenced members in coming to their decision. This would be a charitable view to take of their performance. The more probable explanation is that they would not or could not realize that the fair fame of the colony was involved in the decision of the House. The whole treatment of the matter was pusillanimous. Nelson, urged to prosecute the directors of the bank who were responsible for the misleading balance-sheets, replied that the bank should do "its own dirty work," and nothing more was done until Byrnes became Premier in 1898 and took a different view of the conduct of the directors and the responsibilities of the Government. He ordered the prosecution of Hart, Morehead, and Webster, the ex-directors of the bank; and their criminal trial on a charge of conspiracy to defraud the shareholders and creditors of the bank and the general public was begun on 24th October 1898. In the meantime Byrnes had died and was succeeded as Premier by Dickson, and it soon became apparent that the Government was not zealous for the condemnation of the accused, who pleaded complete ignorance of the business of the bank they were supposed to be directing. The result of the trial was an acquittal of all the directors, and in this way, said the *Brisbane Courier*, reviewing the whole matter, "the fair fame of Queensland's principal banking institution has been cleared."

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

When the acute phase of the banking crisis had passed, Downer, who was then Premier of South Australia, seeing how the Province had been affected by an upheaval in the causation of which it had truly had no part, conceived the idea that banking troubles in general might be avoided or at least greatly mitigated if the laws of the colonies were made stricter and uniform. He accordingly invited the

Premiers of the principal colonies to meet him for the purpose of discussing the matter. Dibbs of New South Wales and Patterson of Victoria accepted Downer's invitation, and there was a meeting of these three in Melbourne towards the end of May 1893, when the following formal resolution was passed: "Recent events prove that laws require to be enacted with respect to banking in all the colonies, and that legislation should be uniform. That State Banks, as popularly understood, are not required, but that banks of issue should be subject to conditions and restrictions somewhat similar to those imposed on National Banks in the United States of America. These should require a deposit of bonds of the colony or of coin in the Treasury as against the note issue, which the Government should guarantee, and also returns to and inspection by the Government of the general business of the banks. Deposits not bearing interest should be a first charge on assets, and Government should have authority to interfere in event of panic."

It was arranged that Downer should draft a Bill dealing with these subjects and submit it to the Premiers of the different colonies. This Bill, however, was never produced. It must have been obvious to Downer as to any other reflective man that legislation carrying out the idea of Governmental inspection would be useless, because it would place upon the shoulders of the Government work that its officials were incompetent to undertake, and mischievous because such inspection would have been accepted by the public as a Government guarantee of solvency. In place of Downer's general measure there appeared in July 1893 a Treasury Note Bill, introduced by Caldwell, one of Downer's Ministerial colleagues. This provided for the issue of Treasury notes to the amount of £1,000,000 sterling, in denominations ranging from 10s. to £50, these notes being legal tender throughout the Province. Against the issue, a Board nominated by the Government was to hold coin and securities, provided out of the general revenue, and holders were to be entitled

to demand coin at the Treasury in Adelaide in exchange for their notes, in varying proportions. Thus full payment could be required for notes up to the value of £100, 50 per cent for amounts between £100 and £500, 25 per cent for amounts between £500 and £1000, and 10 per cent for amounts in excess of £1000. This absurd measure was given a first reading, but was not further proceeded with. No other legislation was attempted; in fact, South Australia did not pass any financial measure on account of the crisis, the State Bank Bill of a later date being of a quite different nature and designed to meet objects entirely unrelated to that event.

For seven or even nine years the banks in South Australia had conducted their business with the greatest prudence, but, as we have seen, this did not avail to prevent the suspension of four of them, the closing of two out of every three country branches, and an entire dislocation of business. In Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland loss of credit was a cause of the crisis; in South Australia it was purely an effect. Adelaide had remained relatively calm while panic reigned in Melbourne, having no reason to distrust its banks or suspect them of connivance with overtrading, yet shrinkage of credit followed just as it did in the other colonies. London had poured its money into the lap of Victoria until the very eve of the crisis, to South Australia had been given scarcely anything for several years; yet when the crisis came the two colonies fared precisely alike, as London financiers showed no disposition to discriminate between one colony and another.

After 1893 a series of adverse conditions, having no connexion with the crisis, joined with the loss of credit to prevent the speedy recovery of the Province. During the five years following the crisis, copper averaged in London about £48 a ton, ranging between £43 : 6s. and £52 : 4s. At the highest of these prices the best mines could hardly pay dividends, and at the lowest many of them could not pay the wages of the miners. Nor did the Province find compensation in its agriculture, which

was now its most prominent industry. The wheat harvest of 1893 proved exceptionally fine, but the farmer obtained less than 2s. a bushel for his wheat; in 1894 the harvest was light, but the price of wheat on the farms was only about 2s. 6d. a bushel. In 1896 there was a large advance in price and wheat continued to be fairly high during the rest of the period, but the harvests of these years were abnormally small, so that few of the farmers obtained any benefit from the enhanced prices. The severe droughts which depressed agriculture also injuriously affected the pastoral industry, causing very great losses both of sheep and cattle.

The depression of the three great industries of the state is plainly to be seen in the trade returns. In 1891 the value of South Australian produce exported was £4,685,000; in the years now under review the values were :

1893 . . .	£3,295,000	1896 . . .	£3,269,000
1894 . . .	3,347,000	1897 . . .	2,484,000
1895 . . .	3,537,000	1898 . . .	2,487,000

The highest figure of these years was barely three-fourths of the total of 1891, and the lowest a little more than half. If then South Australia had depended entirely on its own trade during these years it would indeed have been in a poor condition, but fortunately its geographical position gave it the Broken Hill trade, and to this the enterprise of its merchants added that of Western Australia. The trade of these places exceeded that of the Province proper, and its possession goes far to account for the fact that South Australia came through these very trying years almost unscathed.

In addition to providing its merchants and traders with new and lucrative business, Western Australia offered the Province a rich and genuine field for investment and, to those who felt inclined, an unlimited field for speculation. The chief market for Western Australian mining stocks was Adelaide. A large number of mining companies had been floated in that city, and at times speculation in these shares on its Stock Exchange attained

a feverish intensity, almost equalling the speculation in Broken Hill shares at the close of the previous decade. One of these booms occurred in the middle of 1895. All the country districts of South Australia, as well as Adelaide itself, participated, and orders poured in from other parts of Australia, from London, and even from the continent of Europe. In many new companies the price of shares commonly advanced 100 per cent before the scrip was issued, and in the case of one syndicate the shares, issued at £10, rose in a few weeks to £220, and then fell in two days to £100. The mining boom of 1895 died out in October, but there was a similar though briefer one in May of the following year.

The greater part of the buying at these and other times was of a purely speculative character, for profit on resale and not for dividends; but, whether as speculation or as investment, South Australia, as a whole, reaped a fine harvest from its Western Australian connexion. The investment in Western Australian mines and other enterprises had the effect of withdrawing money in very appreciable quantities from South Australian enterprises, and already in 1895 there were complaints that both the pastoral industry and agriculture were starving for want of capital. The long drought of 1895-98 had swept away much of the capital invested in pastoral pursuits, and, owing to the diversion of money to Western Australia, there was not only a difficulty but for some time an impossibility of replacing it. As regards agriculture, the lack of capital was obvious for any one to see. Taken as a whole, it was generally admitted that farming was bad, and as the majority of the farmers were small settlers, without the skill which could command capital, it was likely to continue to be bad. The only person to whom a farmer could turn for money to work his land was the storekeeper, and as the storekeeper had a perfect appreciation of the risks he ran, the conditions on which his advances were made and repayment exacted were usually such as to make the advances of little value to the recipient.

From various causes co-operation amongst farmers was impracticable, and as it was essential that assistance should be given to small farmers, if the class was to be retained, the Government decided to take the business into its own hands. In 1895 an Act was passed establishing a State Bank for the purpose of making advances to farmers and other producers on the security of their freehold lands or Crown leaseholds. The necessary funds were to be provided by the issue of mortgage bonds guaranteed by the Province, the maximum rate of interest to be charged on such bonds being fixed at 5 per cent. This Act took the place of a much more ambitious project, which sought to establish a State Bank of issue and deposit, of which the existing savings banks were to form a nucleus, and which was to make advances to farmers on the same security. The State Bank was opened in February 1896 and was managed with great prudence. It was of value to the smaller farmers, many of whom had recourse to it, but it greatly disappointed the hopes of some of its warmest supporters, as it did not lend money on appreciably easier terms than the ordinary banks charged their customers for advances on good security.

The years 1899 and 1900 were in marked contrast to the preceding years. The export of staple produce in 1898 had fallen to £2,487,000; it rose to £3,945,000 in 1899, and to this increase the three great lines of production contributed. Wheat fell in price, but the normal harvest of 1898-99 allowed the export of bread-stuffs to be increased from £251,000 to £761,000; the extraordinary advance in the price of wool raised the value of that export from £945,000 in 1898 to £1,511,000 in 1899; and copper, which had been so long depressed, rose rapidly in price at the beginning of 1899, so that the average of that year was £78 a ton, an advance well maintained until the close of the following year. In these circumstances the closing years of the century were the most prosperous experienced since the great crisis.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

At the end of 1892 it seemed as if Western Australia had passed through its major difficulties and was entering upon a period of growing prosperity, but though the colony was not in any way involved in the operations which brought on the financial crisis in the eastern states, it felt the effects of that crisis severely for a short time. During the critical months of 1893 all the banks operating in the colony, with the exception of the Western Australian Bank, were subjected to a heavy strain, and two of them, the National Bank of Australasia and the Commercial Bank of Australia, as we have noted elsewhere, succumbed. These two banks continued business after suspension, but found it necessary to call in a large proportion of their advances, and as other banks were doing the same, the last nine months of the year were a period of acute financial pressure. In its ultimate result it is probable the crisis was of benefit to Western Australia, inasmuch as it brought to the colony a large accession of population, including many experienced miners, and, after the first shock of distrust was over, it diverted a large volume of British capital from the eastern colonies to the new goldfields and other Western Australian enterprises.

To the financial evils of the year 1893 was added a severe drought which greatly retarded the development of the mines and rendered carriage to the goldfields, except by camel train, absolutely impossible. In September there was a water famine at Coolgardie, where three or four thousand people had congregated, and for a long period there was never more than enough water for drinking purposes. The drought continued into 1894, but, in spite thereof, that year saw a great transformation in the condition of the colony and the beginning of the big rush from the eastern colonies. Discoveries of gold were made continually and were of such a kind as assured an immediate future of great prosperity. English investors began to take a keen interest in these discoveries, and in

November 1894 the Londonderry Mine at Coolgardie, with a paid-up capital of £750,000, was offered in London and over-subscribed. Many another soon followed.

The colony now came into possession of an abundant revenue, largely owing to the increase in imports, but land revenue and mining dues also contributed to the expansion. The revenue of 1894 showed a surplus of about £30,000, while 1895 gave a surplus of £200,000 in spite of a greatly increased expenditure. The prime necessity of the time was direct communication between the coast and the mines, and the Government decided to connect Perth and Coolgardie by railway; during 1895 it was able to borrow in London £750,000 for this purpose at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The stock was sold at slightly over £103, a handsome price, clearly showing the firm belief of the London market in Western Australia's future. As to what that future was likely to be there seemed no sort of doubt in the colony itself. From January to September 1895 the gold-mining companies floated had a nominal capital of £20,000,000. The output of gold, which rose to £880,000 for the year, represented a very small return on the money already embarked in the mines; but, nevertheless, on all sides the position was considered satisfactory. All the mines were in the initial stage, on few of them was there adequate machinery, but there was ample evidence that there was gold in abundance.

The pastoral industry was greatly depressed during 1895; in some parts of the colony there were floods and in others drought. The wool clip was greatly below that of the previous year and the price so poor that the value of the clip was the lowest obtained since 1879. Weather conditions were bad for the farmers also, but a low yield was more than compensated by good prices, especially for fodder, and to meet the demand nearly two-thirds of the wheat area was cut for hay.

The year 1896 was marked by feverish activity in every avenue of industry and enterprise. The imports bounded up to £6,500,000, equivalent to £54 per inhabitant, and in

this sum was about a million in specie, required by the banks to meet the greatly increased needs of their business, the like sum imported during the previous year proving quite insufficient. Population poured in from Victoria, South Australia, and even from New South Wales, miners principally, but also speculators, middlemen, shopkeepers, and the usual followers of a miners' camp. For the development of the mines, machinery valued at more than £1,000,000 sterling was landed at Fremantle and carried to the mines by the newly opened railways. Of goods for personal use there was also a large importation, far in excess of all reasonable requirements, the value of food-stuffs, wines, spirits, and intoxicants being nearly £1,500,000, and of wearing apparel £650,000.

The importations were so heavy and the means of dealing with them at the ports and on the railways so inadequate that there was a great dislocation of business. Trucks had to be made to carry the stuff which, meantime, lay about on the wharves, and some articles which had been brought to the colony in abundance were selling in Perth at double their ordinary price because the wharves could not be cleared. On the goldfields, naturally, things were much worse than at Perth, and the traders who contrived to get their goods to the mining centres obtained enormous prices for them. Towards the end of the year the Government had the transport system well in hand ; the railway rolling stock was largely increased, and postal and telegraphic communication established wherever men were congregated in appreciable numbers.

The difficulties in obtaining water very greatly hampered mining operations. The Government had many parties at work endeavouring to find underground supplies, without any particular success, and it exerted itself to the utmost to protect and conserve such water as existed in reservoirs, tanks, soaks, lagoons, lakes, and claypans. The very enumeration of the location of this water shows how desperately short was the supply. For the larger goldfield towns, the requirements for domestic purposes

were met by condensing natural supplies otherwise unusable, and much enterprise was displayed in the erection of condensers both by the Government and by private users; but it was not until 1903 that the problem of the goldfields' water-supply was solved by pumping water from the coast to Coolgardie, a distance of 351 miles.

The value of gold won during 1896 was below £1,100,000, and proved a great disappointment to the already numerous body of shareholders of Western Australian mines. During the last few months of the year, when the extent of the probable yield had transpired, there was a marked fall in the price of mining stocks, and in December the slump in the London market was almost in the nature of a panic. But there was no gainsaying the existence of vast and rich gold deposits, and the rush to Western Australia continued very strong during 1897, so that the population at the end of that year was nearly four times as numerous as ten years previously when the gold discoveries of Yilgarn and Southern Cross were made. Agriculture was making very good progress; the partial drought of the previous year broke up and the season of 1897 was excellent. Above all, the return from the goldfields greatly increased, chiefly on account of the wonderful finds at Kalgoorlie, the output of the year being valued at £2,565,000, considerably more than double that of the previous year. Great as was this return, it did not prove altogether satisfactory to investors; mining stocks which had improved during the first half of the year declined again in the second half, and the deterioration of price continued into 1898 in spite of an increase in the total gold won.

The imports in 1897 were nearly as great as in the preceding year, but in 1898 they declined in value to £5,242,000, or by about one-fifth. Speaking in August, Sir John Forrest described the year as one of trade depression. There was, however, no depression in a true sense. The purchasing power of the people was well maintained, savings had increased, and the gold production,

which had touched £4,000,000, was now the largest in any colony of Australia. The decrease in the imports indicated that Western Australia had received from abroad nearly as much capital as it then required and that the mines were well supplied with machinery. There was still a balance of migration in favour of the colony, but not one comparable with that of the four preceding years. Nor was this a sign of depression. The lessening of immigration was due partly to the demand for labour on the mines being, for the time, almost satisfied, and partly to the improved conditions in other parts of Australia. The only thing that seemed to give cause for anxiety was the weakness of the banking position. Deposits had fallen from £4,577,000 in 1896 to £3,601,000 in 1898, and advances which had risen to £3,350,000 in 1897 fell back a little in the following year. This movement, if it had occurred in a settled community, might have been taken as significant of unsoundness, but in Western Australia it was no more than a readjustment due to the ascertained needs of business.

The remaining years of the period were marked by amazing prosperity. The production of gold increased enormously, but it was not on this alone that the colony depended. Agriculture made marked progress, and Western Australia was indeed repeating the experience of Victoria, that many who came to dig for gold turned to the less exciting pursuit of farming. The pastoral industry, benefiting by the large demand for meat and by greater market facilities, flourished; the timber trade was greatly developed, and various minor industries were soundly established. The chief drawback to this satisfactory picture was the condition of the public revenue. The wide distribution of population following the gold discoveries had made the government of the colony costly, and there was an increasing difficulty in obtaining revenue sufficient to meet the demands upon the Treasury. Like the other Australian colonies, Western Australia had shown a strong repugnance to direct taxation, nor would it have been practicable in the colony's stage of develop-

ment to have obtained a substantial revenue from any scheme of direct taxation without interfering with the progress of the country. It was this difficulty of obtaining an adequate revenue that caused the leading men of Western Australia to hesitate on the threshold of Federation. In the end the difficulty was met by the Australian Commonwealth Constitution Act granting special treatment to Western Australia. Under that Act goods of Australian origin were given free entry from one state to another. To this general principle an exception was made in favour of Western Australia, and, while its goods had this right of free entry, the Parliament of the colony was allowed, for five years after the imposition of uniform customs duties by the Commonwealth, to impose duties on goods not originally imported from beyond Australia, provided such duties did not go beyond certain limits. Thus amended, the Act of Union was accepted by the responsible statesmen of the colony without demur, but opposition was not entirely silenced. There had been during the last years of the century much heated controversy in regard to fiscal matters, and the creed of Protection, especially of Protection against the "cheap labour" of the eastern colonies, held a considerable place in the public mind. New industries were springing up and the artisans of the south-western district were desirous of keeping their high wages, which they considered would be endangered by Federation. Such opposition as there was proceeded from this motive.

TASMANIA

Throughout the year 1894 there was great commercial and industrial depression in Tasmania, and the distress among the labouring population was so acute that the Government determined to borrow, at whatever cost, and to provide work for the unemployed. Early in the year subscriptions were invited in London for a loan of £1,000,000, carrying interest at the rate of 4 per cent; the issue was over-subscribed at £99 : 10s. net, which, in view

of the operation of the previous year, was considered a great success. The ordinary revenue of the island, however, continued unsatisfactory in spite of the recent revision of taxation and, further taxation being necessary, a general tariff of 10 per cent was imposed, with 20 per cent duty on some articles and high specific duties on others. In 1895 the new duties, joined to a further reduction in an already low expenditure, brought about a slight surplus; thereafter to the end of the period the revenue of the colony was well above the expenditure.

The three years following the bank crisis were a time of serious strain on the population of Tasmania and of acute anxiety to the Government. The imports declined enormously. In 1891 they had reached the considerable total of £2,051,964, in 1894 they were not more than £980,000, so low had the purchasing power of the population fallen; but great efforts were made to develop the production of the island and these were attended with marked success. The pastoral industry unfortunately remained depressed, but from 1893 onward there was a marked increase in all forms of agriculture and very great care was taken to maintain and improve the fruit industry. Mining, however, was the great mainstay of the island. The yield of tin was good, but prices were low almost to the end of the period; there was an improvement in the gold yield and in the production of silver and copper. From 1896 onwards conditions greatly improved, and the colony was fairly through its troubles. The favourable reports on the copper deposits of Mount Lyell have already been mentioned; these reports were amply confirmed by the actual working. In 1897 the value of copper exported was about £320,000, which was larger than that of any other metal; in 1900 it was £900,000. The greater part of the copper came from Mount Lyell, where the metal was found associated with silver: indeed the great mine produced more silver during this period than all the silver mines at Zeehan, and it was owing mainly to the development of the copper deposits that the period closed for Tasmania with the most hopeful prospects.

VIII

THE LABOUR PARTY: CONTINUATION OF ITS HISTORY

NEW SOUTH WALES

DURING the administrations of Parkes and Dibbs the serious difficulties that stood in the way of the Labour Party and prevented it becoming an effective political machine had developed and remained unsolved. These difficulties were chiefly two: the control of the Party executive and the parliamentary pledge.

The early trouble between the executive of the Labour Electoral Leagues and the Trades and Labour Council had been forgotten in face of the serious dissensions within the parliamentary party; but it remained and threatened the very existence of the movement. The Labour vote derived its strength from two elements, trade unionists and Labour sympathizers, whose callings did not bring them within the sphere of unionism, but who were eager democrats, anxious for the realization of the most advanced Labour ideals. The trade unionists were numerically the weaker body, and it was impossible to expect the Labour movement to succeed if the Trades and Labour Council persisted in an attempt to gather to itself a predominating share of control. In 1892, as narrated, the Council was forced to agree to a compromise, and in the present period this was extended and made intelligible.

The parliamentary pledge was a source of offence to many Labour sympathizers and a disunited party faced the electors in 1894. The controversy extended to the

second Parliament in which Labour was represented, and was solved, as we shall see, in favour of the Solidarity wing. This solution closed the ranks of the Party and made its continued existence possible.

The term of Reid's Administration saw these two fundamental problems, which vexed the Party during its earlier stages, effectually disposed of. From the settlement of the dispute between the Trades and Labour Council and the Electoral Leagues, and the adoption of the pledge, the Labour Party gained great advantages: the Independent Party ceased to exist; the Party machine, both parliamentary and electoral, central and provincial, was organized and elaborated; the sectarian, the fiscal, and the federal issues were submerged; the unrealities of Party manœuvring discredited, and the way cleared for a straightforward issue between capital and labour.

The period was thus marked by a crisis and a decision which clearly strengthened the claim of the Solidarities that they alone represented, and could be trusted to represent, the views of Labour. On the formation of the Reid Ministry in 1894 Cook was offered and accepted the office of Postmaster-General. This act called attention to the real meaning of the struggle over the pledge and made it evident that, if there had been no pledge and no guarantee of isolation, it was likely that the Labour Party, as happened in the case of the Independents, would have attached itself to one side or the other, and in the end have become merely the industrial wing of a Party dabbling in social betterment only that it might enjoy the sensations of well-doing, and, perchance, the fruits of office. The danger of the position was seen in time and, before the eventful resolution on the Neild affair in 1899, the New South Wales Labour Party had irrevocably decided that its true policy was that of complete isolation.

But this aspect of the matter must not lead us to neglect the reverse side. The policy of "support in return for concessions," the "Possibilism" of the German Revisionists, was followed with more or less consistency from the

beginning. At first the Party over-estimated its own importance, as when at the first Conference of the Labour Electoral Leagues it was decreed that support was only to be given to the Government in power on condition that "a good portion" of the platform was made the subject of legislative enactment. Eighteen months later the pretensions of the Party were much modified and, early in 1893, the executive of the Labour Leagues did not look for the carrying of a "good portion" of its platform, but was content to keep the Dibbs Government in power, "in order that several measures that would benefit Labour, and were included in the Labour platform, might be passed into law as early as possible."

It is perhaps the education of the Labour Party in the national point of view, represented in the foregoing decision, that is, after all, the most obvious and most important characteristic of the period now under review. The nice appreciation of the inner meaning of parliamentary crises, the judicious use of the whole armoury of orthodox parliamentary tactics, a contentment with the half if the whole were not obtainable,—in short the use of the political method: it was the training in this which changed the parliamentary Labour Party from an impotent group of hysterical, blocking, unpopular intransigents to a compact body of artful parliamentarians, who knew how to resist the seductive advances of W. J. Lyne and how to drain the last drop of reluctant honey from the Reidite hive. The Sleath (Wilcannia) speaking amid a loud and disapproving hum of conversation on the Grasmere outrage of August 1894, attributing the trouble to "aliens, armed with revolvers, the scum of Victoria and New Zealand," in fact, "the scum of the world," is a different and a much less formidable figure than the Sleath who, five years later, fulminated against the notorious "precedent" and the "grave constitutional breach" of the Neild grant.

The great act of power on the part of the Labour Party in displacing Reid on 12th September 1899 was a fitting climax to the stage in its progress we are now

considering. The Party vote had indeed overthrown the veteran Parkes as early as 1891, but that vote was unskilful, considered as a parliamentary move, since the Coal Mines Regulation Bill, even without the Eight Hours provision, was likely to prove a more useful achievement than the ousting of a Ministry. Further, Parkes need not have gone out had he not been a profoundly scrupulous constitutionalist with an inherent horror of failing to observe the conventions. In September 1899, however, the Party achieved the downfall of a man who was not only an expert in all branches of party tactics, but who, for excellent reasons, was willing to spare no extravagances in order to retain office. By this date, then, the character of their destiny was already moulded. After this preliminary survey we can now turn to consider the period in some detail.

The returns for the General Election of July 1894 show that, while the combined vote of the Solidarity and Independent sections cast for the Opposition would place the Ministerialists in a minority of eleven, the Solidarity Party alone did not hold the balance. Hence Reid, unless he united in fervent opposition to himself both wings of the Labour group, could safely defy his opponents. But the union of these two wings was a most unlikely contingency, and one that the Premier deftly postponed to the Greek Kalends by offering to Joseph Cook the portfolio of Postmaster-General in his Cabinet. The breach was assured when the Solidarity section opposed the new Minister on his seeking re-election.

When Parliament met at the end of August 1894 an attempt was made by some of the Independent Labour members to arrange for a working agreement with the Solidarity Party, so that the whole body of members returned by the votes of Labour should be able to act together on Labour questions. Their efforts, being received without cordiality by their fellow-Independents and with contempt by the Solidarities, came to nothing. But while the Independents in Parliament were losing their

identity as a wing of the Labour Party owing to their refusal to submit to the pledge required of them, there was a disposition on the part of the Labour Leagues, after the election of 1894, to make the pledge more palatable to the great body of their supporters, who were not members of trade organizations. The first conference after the elections was held early in January 1895, and a discussion of the problem of the pledge occupied an important place in the proceedings. A proposal that the pledge should be made less binding was brought forward but withdrawn, and a specific motion "that the pledge be amended by the excision of the words 'establishment of a monopoly or the conferring further privileges on the already privileged class'" was negatived after an interesting debate. It was plain that the conference had no sympathy with the Independents; at the same time it was thought desirable that the large body of Labour sympathizers, who had supported the Independents, should be conciliated, and it was considered that the way to conciliation was along the path of compromise on the question of the pledge. It was therefore agreed that a new pledge should be drawn up, and a committee was appointed for that purpose. This pledge was formulated with great deliberation and seemed to suggest that not the letter but the spirit must be regarded. It asked for everything and insisted on nothing; at the same time it enshrined more strongly than ever the authority of the caucus and was in every sense a triumph for the principle of solidarity. The pledge as accepted ran as follows :

I hereby pledge myself not to oppose the selected candidate of this or any other branch of the Political Labour League. I also pledge myself, if returned to Parliament, on all occasions to do my utmost to ensure the carrying out of the principles embodied in the Labour platform, and on all questions, and especially on questions affecting the fate of a Government, to vote as a majority of the Labour Party may decide at a duly constituted caucus meeting.

The subscribers to Cook's manifesto of the previous

April found the pledge a declaration of undying hostility to their principles and they made no further attempt to ally themselves with the Labour Party. The Labour principles of these so-called Labour Independents were not robust enough to enable them to form a united parliamentary party. The different members drifted to the other parliamentary parties according to their proclivities. Only three of them—Brown, Edden, and Black—accepted the new pledge and were henceforth numbered among the Solidarities; Cook was Postmaster-General; Gardiner was beaten in the election of July 1895 by a split vote; Schey and Wood threw in their lot with the Protectionist Party; Bavister, Fegan, Hollis, and Newman joined the Free Traders, while J. B. Nicholson alone clung to his Independent principles.

In May 1894 the Sydney Trades and Labour Council began to make arrangements for putting into operation in New South Wales the scheme for an Australian Federation of Labour, drawn up at the Hobart Congress of 1889. The new arrangement, which was to come into force on 1st July following, meant a considerable alteration in the existing trade union organization. The old Trades and Labour Council was to be superseded by a larger and more democratic body, and country unions were to be grouped into local affiliations. The scheme was drawn up and put into force, but the electoral rearrangements arising out of these changes, and also rendered necessary by the parliamentary position of the Labour Party itself, could not be completed until there was a conference with the Labour Electoral Leagues, which would not hold their annual conference until the beginning of 1895. The Australian Federation of Labour, as the trade union conference was now called, put forward its proposals for the amalgamation of the two bodies. It is not necessary to give these proposals in detail; the scheme which they outlined was not really for the amalgamation of the two organizations, but for the mediatization of the Labour Electoral Leagues by the Federation of Labour. In effect,

it was a renewed attempt of the trades unionists to control the political movement, of which indeed they had been the inaugurating force.

Naturally, this benevolent scheme did not commend itself to the executive (central committee) of the Labour Electoral Leagues. Its counter-proposition was that the Australian Federation of Labour should take the same position as that previously held by the Trades and Labour Council, that is to say, that six delegates elected by the provincial council should sit on the central committee, and that the president of the Council should be ex-officio chairman of the committee. There appeared to be every likelihood of the two bodies coming to an *impasse*, in view of the fact that the rules of the Australian Federation of Labour, as drafted at the Intercolonial Trades Congress held at Ballarat in 1891, provided that it should have sole management of political affairs. Both sides, however, were desirous of coming to an accommodation and further action was postponed pending another conference. This took place on 30th March 1895 under the presidency of J. C. Watson, President of the Provincial Council of the Australian Federation of Labour. There were seven delegates from each organization who were instructed to "endeavour to arrange a basis of amalgamation in regard to the political Labour movement, *failing which* to consider some plan whereby the two organizations might work separately but harmoniously." The minor difficulties that were immediately discussed were the alteration of the name of the political organization to "Political Labour Federation," the revision of the Labour platform, and the modification of the pledge exacted from candidates. When, however, the Federation of Labour submitted its draft pledge, it was found to differ immaterially from the modified pledge already accepted by the Leagues, as recorded above. The central obstacle in the way of agreement was the rule of the Federation that the political movement should be controlled by a permanent committee of five, elected at the annual conference, in addition to the chairman and

secretary of the provincial council of the Federation. It was obvious that this regulation, if respected in the arrangement between the two bodies, would mean the extinction of the central committee of the Leagues. To prevent the two organizations coming into collision, it was eventually proposed that the Leagues should control the Sydney and suburban electorates, and that the movement in the country should be left to the different councils attached to the Federation. This compromise, however, was obviously a clumsy makeshift, and a new draft scheme for the amalgamation of the two bodies was submitted to a special Conference of the Leagues held on 24th May. The conference rejected the compromise as unworkable, and adopted a scheme of which the following are the leading and essential features. The new organization should be called the "Political Labour League." The League was to consist of (1) members of the unions affiliated with the Eastern Provincial Council of the Australian Federation of Labour, contributing to the funds of the Labour League; (2) members of other unions not so affiliated with which special arrangements shall have been made by the local district assembly or unattached electoral branch; (3) other adult residents in the colony who shall have subscribed to the platform and constitution of the organization.

Branch leagues were to be established in each electorate, but no branch was to be recognized until a declaration, accepting the platform and constitution of the League, signed by the officers of the branch, should have been forwarded to the district assembly, or where there existed no district assembly, to the executive committee. Branch leagues as a rule should be grouped into district assemblies consisting of not less than three electoral branches, but the metropolitan area was to form one district assembly, and where there were district councils of the Australian Labour Federation the boundaries of the League and the Federation should, if practicable, be coterminous.

The executive committee was to consist of a president, general secretary, and seven members elected by the annual

conference, together with two delegates from the Eastern Provincial Council of the Federation. This executive committee, apart from a right to make known anything in the past of a selected candidate which would disqualify him from association with the Labour Party, was not given authority to interfere with the selection of the district assemblies, except where fraud was alleged, but it had power to declare null and void the unconstitutional selection of any candidate in branches not affiliated with any district assembly. A district assembly was given authority to decide all disputes referred to it ; a right of appeal was, however, reserved to the executive committee.

The draft scheme laid before the conference provided that " No member of the Labour Party shall accept office in a Ministry except with the consent of three-fourths of the Party, given in caucus." This was unanimously rejected, the President declaring that under the present circumstances of the Party it would be undesirable to have one of its members a Minister, that the inclusion of Cook in the present Ministry had done more harm to the Labour cause than all the work of the National (Employers) Association, and that the retention of the rule would be a great temptation to corruption.

When the conference had concluded its labours, the members of the two Leagues met as a Convention to consider the scheme that had been drawn up. This Convention had no difficulty in accepting the scheme as a whole—discussion ranged chiefly round the form of the pledge. The Labour Electoral Leagues Conference had decided to go back upon the decision of the preceding January and to reinsert the words " establishment of a monopoly or the conferring of further privileges upon the already privileged class," about which there had previously been such trouble and which had been struck out of the pledge of the previous conference. In Convention, the representatives of the Labour Federation insisted on the modified form. The added words, they affirmed, might be made the excuse for raising contentions, as they could be twisted to mean

almost anything, and where there were contentions as to questions of principle there was always danger of schism. The insertion of the proviso in regard to monopolies was not done merely to shield the Party from temptation. Behind it there was a desire on the part of some of the delegates to hit at certain ex-members of the Party supposed to be interested in obtaining from Parliament a concession of a quasi-monopolistic character. In the end the addition was not made, and the pledge stood as settled by the conference of January 1895, and already quoted *in extenso*.

The adopted scheme bore some resemblance to that originally proposed by the Australian Labour Federation, but the permanent control of the political Labour movement was not handed over to the trade unions as desired by the Federation. Nevertheless the trade unions through their direct representation on the executive of the Political Labour League obtained an honourable place in the direction of the political Labour movement.

The platform of the League came up for consideration at the conference of January 1895, and various important changes were made in it. Plank 12 originally provided for "the abolition of the present defence force and the establishment of our military system on a purely voluntary basis"; this was omitted. Plank 14 provided for the execution of all Government contracts in the colony; this was changed to "all public works to be carried out by the Government without the intervention of any contractor." Six new planks were added:

1. Ownership by the State or Local Government bodies of such works as railways, tramways, water-supply, public lighting, or other works for the good of the community.
2. Exclusion of alien inferior races.
3. Graduated income tax.
4. Further graduation of probate duties.
5. Vesting of liquor traffic in the State.
6. Compulsory arbitration.

The appearance of the first of these is significant. It does not indeed proclaim the collectivist idea in the

uncompromising manner of the Lane-inspired plank of the Queensland Party, which demanded "the nationalization of all sources of wealth and all means of producing and distributing wealth," yet it marks a considerable advance from the mild approval expressed in the 1891 platform of the "extension of the principle of the Government as an employer through the medium of local self-governing bodies." The appearance of the sixth of the new planks marks the abandonment of the strike as an element of industrial warfare, and from the point of view of practical politics was much the most important plank of the whole platform.

In Parliament the Labour Party exercised influence and showed its independence in various ways. The first and least effective form of action was that of individual members, taken without previous consultation with the Party as a whole, yet nevertheless, as a rule, voicing the Labour view on passing events or on matters of a more or less public character. During the whole period under review, more especially in the earlier years, when their sense of economy in debate was undeveloped, Labour members are found moving the adjournment of the House to call attention, now to the excessive remuneration of a higher official, now to the excessive castigation of an inferior one, now to the problem of unemployment, now to the incidents of a current industrial dispute. Such motions were usually "negatived by the voices," and from a superficial standpoint might be regarded as waste of time and energy. Yet such actions, immediately and individually ineffective as they may seem, had their cumulative importance in emphasizing the presence in the House of a new enthusiasm, at times childish and unjust, but nevertheless very real; an enthusiasm for a point of view hitherto represented only when it suited party tactics and for a subject matter hitherto only the material for party bickering. The effect on the House and on the public at large of this continual emphasis of the independence and special character of the Labour Party may of course be easily over-estimated, but

on the Party itself it can hardly be gainsaid. As long as individual members allowed themselves this freedom of criticism, there was little danger of the Labour electorate complaining that the Labour members as a whole were but a wing of the Party in power, while Reid himself was prevented from pluming himself on the possession of a body of placable auxiliaries.

The members of the Labour Party were most diligent in their attendance at the sittings of Parliament and took full advantage of the time at the disposal of private members to submit Bills relating to their own especial area. An interesting and not insignificant incident occurred in connexion with the Eight Hours Bill which Schey, one of the Independent Labour members, had introduced. The Bill was down for its second reading and there appeared little chance of its being carried owing to the short time at disposal between the beginning of the sitting and seven o'clock, when Government business would have been taken. However, Schey, equal to the emergency, without warning moved the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the debate on his Bill to be carried on after seven o'clock. The Government was caught napping, and the Solidarities, rallying to the side of a renegade with so good a cause, helped to carry the motion by a large majority. Though the protagonist in this instance was not a legitimate Labourite, the occurrence illustrates the sort of independent action that, occasionally indulged in, had a certain value in keeping the Premier up to the mark.

Besides this activity in isolation the Labour Party occasionally deliberately joined the direct Opposition in opposing the Government on points of its policy which were important, but not of such vital character as to imperil its existence. This was a species of activity that they did not indulge in with much frequency; but they were not given many opportunities, as Reid and his colleagues knew how to shape their policy so as to avoid unduly straining the allegiance of their Labour supporters,

or perhaps it would be fairer to say that they learnt to do so after their fall over the franchise provisions of the Local Government Bill. This Bill, introduced amongst Reid's earliest measures, provided that the local government areas should determine their own franchise, but that on their first constitution they should have such franchise fixed by a proclamation of the Governor. The Legislative Assembly was against this and required that the franchise should be fixed in the Bill. Reid therefore proposed a clause giving occupiers a vote, and property-owners from one to four votes in each subdivision of a local government area, according to the value of their property in such area. Under this franchise it was possible for one man to have twenty votes. To this quaint proposal an amendment was moved on behalf of the Labour Party, the effect of which was to limit property-owners to one vote for the whole area, irrespective of the extent and value of their property. The Opposition rallied to the support of the Labour Party and the Government was beaten. Reid had been clamouring for the extension of local government during the whole period of his political life, but he now dropped the Bill and local government was not again heard of during his political career. He did not, however, forget the lesson of the incident and never again made it impossible for the Labour Party to support his proposals.

The effect of the Labour Party's presence in Parliament in giving direction to the Ministerial programme is very difficult to determine with any accuracy. According to the claims made on its behalf, a great portion of the work of the Reid Government was in agreement with the Labour programme and carried out under Labour influence. But Reid was not absolutely dependent on the vote of the Labour Party during his first Parliament, and his Ministry, being filled with the spirit of reform, required little stimulation to take up Liberal measures. In his second Parliament, as we shall see, it was different. Attention has already been called to the close connexion between

the progress of the Labour movement in England and in Australia. This same close connexion was observable in other departments of political thought, and it is probable that Reid's Government would have been disposed, in its earlier years, to pass humanitarian and other advanced social legislation, even if it had been independent of the support of the Labour Party. Betterment was in the air, and Reid's opportunism readily adapted itself to the conditions of the time. His policy speech on 9th August 1894 was of a kind to encourage the Labour Party to believe that it would be able to squeeze more out of the new Cabinet than it had won from Dibbs, and the actions of individual Ministers gave still more encouragement. Sydney Smith, the Minister for Mines, spoke about forcing through Parliament a Coal Mines Regulation Bill with an eight-hours clause, and Young, the new Minister for Works, lost no time in showing the direction of his sympathies by issuing, early in September, a Minute prohibiting the subletting of Government contracts, a favourite demand of the Labour Party.

The Opposition was not disposed to await the cementing of the alliance between the Government and the Labour Party and sought, by introducing the fiscal question, to split the Labour Party as it did in 1891. Dibbs therefore, in March 1895, tried the temper of the Legislative Assembly with a motion of censure; another member of the Opposition thought further to gain the sympathies of the Labour element by moving an amendment censuring the Government for failure to deal with the problem of unemployment, and other baits to catch the Labour Party were added. So far as the Solidarity Party was concerned the fiscal question was definitely sunk and could no longer promote discord, and the Party voted solidly with the Government against both motion and amendment. The point of view of his Party was thus pleasantly put to Dibbs by McGowen: "It is necessary for us to choose the lesser of two evils. . . . The position we take up is not that we want a land tax or a Factory Act, but that we want

something done for the social conditions that are ruling to-day. . . . Not one word of the Leader of the Opposition carried a ray of light to the workless workers." The second censure motion to which the Reid Government was subjected was proposed on 16th May 1895 by Parkes, who was angling for a coalition. He moved that "the continuance of the Government in office would retard the progress of much-needed legislation and seriously prejudice the cause of Australian Federation." Parkes calculated that the regular Opposition would vote against the Government on this motion, although it was notorious that the principal men amongst them were anti-Federalists; he hoped that the Labour Party might go with him also, as amongst the planks of its so-called ordinary platform was one favouring "Federation upon a national as opposed to an imperialistic basis." In this, however, he was disappointed, as a recent Labour Conference had decreed "that whereas in the opinion of this Conference the destruction of the land monopoly is the first step in obtaining economic reform, the first plank in the fighting platform should be land value taxation." The Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill had already been sent to the Council, when Parkes moved his motion; it was counted as one pledge redeemed by Reid, and when the division on the censure motion was taken the Labour Party was solidly on the side of the Government.

Reid's record in his first Parliament as Premier was distinctly pleasing to the Labour Party and suggestive of its influence. He had introduced and passed through the Assembly a Land and Income Tax Bill, a Coal Mines Regulation Bill, a Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Bill designed to introduce the principle of compulsion, an Electoral Act Amendment Bill, to reduce the period of residence in the case of transferred rights to one month, a Mining on Private Lands Amendment Bill, and, finally, a Navigation Act Amendment Bill. All these measures were passed by large majorities in the Assembly, the Labour Party giving the Government its fullest support,

but were rejected or shelved by the Council. Reid therefore determined to dissolve the Assembly and to go to the country on the double issue of direct taxation and reform of the Council.

The amalgamation of the Australian Federation of Labour and the Labour Electoral Leagues enabled the Labour Party to fight the elections with united resources and a united front, and the result, while not triumphant, was not disappointing. Labour candidates contested 45 seats and were returned for 18, the number being increased to 19 after the Narrabri by-election; Reid's party numbered 62, but this was reduced by the loss of the Narrabri seat to 61, and the Protectionists numbered 45. In the previous Parliament Reid's following, after the break-up of the Independent Labour group, exceeded in number the Protectionists and Solidarities combined, but in his second Parliament the reformed Labour Party could put the Ministry in a minority if its votes were cast with the Opposition. Such being the case, it was to be expected that an experienced parliamentarian like Reid would lose no time in creating a favourable impression of his policy in the mind of the third Party. His record in the last Parliament was in a sense a good one, in spite of the fact that all his betterment measures had been shelved or rejected by the Council, and throughout the elections he had been studiously careful to conciliate Labour opinion. "The working classes," he had said, "are spoken of as selfish and grasping, but they have gone on for nearly forty years, bearing twice their share of the taxation of the country without organized opposition to . . . injustice affecting them. Put that alongside of the conduct of the Legislative Council and I would like you to tell me which is the narrow, selfish, grasping class in the community." The language of the Labour leader, according to his custom, was less polite, but nevertheless pointed plainly enough to an understanding with the Government. "I have said publicly, and I say it in the House, that the Labour Party are supporting the policy of the Government because they

have shaped that policy. We have been taunted that our leanings are towards Protection, but we entered political life to see some change made in social conditions under which one-half of the labouring population are over-worked, and out of the cruelty of which grow riches for people already wealthy. We have sunk our individuality for the sake of collective good. In party warfare we may have to vote against some of our principles to obtain one of them in the course of legislation. Better far to have the substance than to grasp at the shadow. I hope that good will come out of the appeal to the country; any change must be for the better, and I contend that, if we desire to do anything in the interests of the people of this country, we should not spend so much time in discussion but should help any party that would do it."

Reid's alliance with the Labour Party was not only an affair of legislation. In making appointments to the Council he included the name of Benjamin Backhouse, who was notoriously sympathetic with Labour; he would have included one or two persons officially connected with Labour politics had the Party so desired. But the attitude of Labour at that time was against such appointments; it desired that the Council should be allowed to perish rather than it should be reinforced. At about this time Black was appointed to the Public Works Committee, sure evidence that things were going well.

The administration of the Government also leaned Labour-wards. In March 1895 Reid had proposed in the House an elaborate programme of public works, explicitly stating that "these legitimate works would afford considerable employment to the labouring classes of the colony," upon which Dibbs blunderingly asked "whether that were not the whole object of the business," and received the frank rejoinder: "If it is, can there be a better object?" This policy of public works was maintained by Reid, as far as possible, and the fact was gratefully noticed at the Labour Conference at the beginning of 1896. Nor was outlay spared on the labour settlements at

Wilberforce, Bega, and the particularly futile enterprise at Pitt Town. The principle laid down in Young's Minute against subletting in Government contracts was sustained and developed, and in the early days of the new Parliament this Minister issued a minimum wage schedule; during the whole of 1896 and afterwards the day-labour system was adopted in Government undertakings whenever 'it could be conveniently employed. During the first two years that followed its introduction, the Works Department completed fifty-six enterprises on this system, including railways, harbour works, river improvements, sewerage, water-supplies, road construction, tunnels, bridges, and public buildings. These works were rigidly supervised to prevent loafing, and the day-labour system remained in good repute.

The term of Reid's Administration followed so close on the disastrous financial crisis of 1893, which brought ruin to so large a number of enterprises, that the Ministry escaped the necessity of having to deal with many industrial disputes; there were, however, two important strikes, and in each of these the attitude of the Government was distinctly favourable to the men. These strikes did not occur until Reid had been in office for some years, and will be found dealt with in another place. Here it will suffice to say that the motive of the Government in interfering can hardly be doubted, and the political effect of such interference was obvious and influential, as it was probably intended to be.

Reid came back from the elections of 1895 sufficiently strong, with the support of the Labour Party, to carry his programme of legislation through the Assembly with imposing majorities, and he lost no time in reintroducing the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill so ignominiously shelved by the Council a few months previously. The Bill as it reached the Council a second time contained a provision exempting from taxation estates valued at less than £475, and granting a deduction from the taxable value of all estates of a like amount; as for incomes,

those above £300 a year were alone taxable, and only for their excess over that sum. These exemptions were inserted by the Assembly with an eye to the electorate, and the Council, having no constituencies to think of, reduced the income tax exemption to £160 and struck out the land exemption altogether. In various other ways, less commendable, did the Council interfere with the Bill, so that its amendments large and small numbered seventy-seven. To seventy-one of these Reid agreed with little demur, though some of them affected the policy of the Bill in important directions, but in the case of six he opposed all compromise. To compose the disagreement between the Houses a free conference was held, and McGowen and Black were among the managers appointed by the Assembly. The conference came to an agreement in which the Council conceded very little, and it became evident that Reid was little disposed to push matters to extremes with the nominated Chamber. The land and income tax provisions, however, became law, and one plank of the Labour platform was secured.

The other Bill of the session in which the Labour Party was principally interested fared very differently. On 28th August 1895 the Attorney-General introduced in the Legislative Council the promised Bill for the reform of that body. This provided for a nominee House of sixty members, one-fifth of whom were to retire each year. Its other principal provisions were, that taxation Bills which had been presented by the Assembly to the Council, and had not returned within one month in the same session, might by a resolution of two-thirds of the members on the roll of the Assembly be presented for the Royal Assent. In the case of the rejection of Bills of other kinds passed by the Assembly in two consecutive sessions, the rejected measures might be submitted to a general vote of the electors and, if carried, become law without further reference to the Council. These proposals had short shrift from the Council, being refused a second reading. The question was resumed in the following

year, when the Assembly passed a Bill authorizing a Referendum to be taken on any measure passed by the Assembly and rejected in two consecutive sessions by the Council. Consideration was refused to this Bill by the Council on the ground that it should not have originated in the Assembly.

The Reid Government succeeded, however, in other directions in regard to measures favoured by the Labour Party. The Electoral Law Amendment Act reduced the period of residence in a district necessary to qualify for an elector's right from three months to one month, and the Coloured Races Restriction Act applied the disabilities placed on the entry of Chinese into New South Wales to all coloured races of Asiatic or African origin, including persons who were British subjects by birth. A Mining Laws Amendment Bill was, after serious differences between the two Houses, passed in November 1896; a Factory and Shops Bill was passed after being roughly handled by the Council; and, finally, the Navigation Act Amendment Act was so far amended by the Council as to destroy its merits in the eyes of Labour. It passed both Houses on 13th November 1896.

It can hardly be denied that although social and economic legislation was very backward in New South Wales, there were amongst the foregoing several important achievements for the cause of Labour. Betterment was, however, then being freely advocated, and some of these laws, if not all of them, might have been passed even if the Labour Party had not been in existence. Be that as it may, if every reform proposed during Reid's Administration had been carried out, New South Wales would still have been amongst the more backward countries in regard to industrial legislation. As one of the Labour Party said, there was very much to be done before anything approaching "a fourth-rate millennium" could be brought about.

It will be remembered that several measures of reform greatly desired by the Labour Party, though actually

introduced and passed through the Assembly, met a speedy doom in the Council. It is interesting therefore to note the general attitude of the Labour Party in the face of its triumphs and disappointments, and how far its education in parliamentary methods had progressed. That the Party had finally rid itself of any tendency to adopt the old irreconcilable method and had learnt that most was to be gained by playing, like every one in the House, the traditional parliamentary game, was plainly suggested by McGowen's speech on the Address-in-Reply. It was proved also by its attitude when Reid declared himself ready to endure seventy-one out of the seventy-seven wounds inflicted on the precious Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill. No member of the Party raised a word of protest, and two of them sat on the conference which arranged the compromise on the six "vital" amendments that Reid said he would *not* pass over. When on 17th July 1896 the Government introduced its Factory and Shops Bill, although from the Labour standpoint the proposals of the Bill were far from satisfactory, the attitude of the members was sensible in the extreme. McGowen described it as a "first instalment" of legislation that was much required; Dacey remarked, "It has obviously been constructed to pass the Council, and should unquestionably have been stricter in its provisions as to the practice of sweating," but he added, "let the acts of the Council be upon the heads of the Council." That the acts of the Council were not to be found wanting in vigour at any rate has already been shown. The acceptance of the emasculated Act, for the sake of the crumbs of benefit it still contained, is further evidence of the policy of the Party at this time—accepting small things when larger were not obtainable. The action of the Party when the Bill was returned by the Council illustrates at once its practicability and its influence. The Minister in charge said he would accept the deletion of the clauses which required that Chinese-made furniture should be stamped. McGowen at once protested, and straightway

the clauses in question were reinserted; but when for the second time the Bill came back with the clauses expunged, the leader of the third Party, observing how the land lay, made no objection to the concession of the point.

A still more interesting illustration may be drawn from the debates on the Coal Mines Regulation Bill in September 1896. This measure came back from the Council with the limitation of the hours of working altered from eight to ten, and as a compromise the Minister in charge suggested nine. Crick, a prominent member of the Opposition, saw his chance and exhorted his dear friends of the Labour Party to be as adamant, when so precious and so historical a principle was at stake, and to refuse the Ministerial compromise. But the party declined to imperil the Bill for the remote chance of obtaining the eight-hours day, which was one of its fundamentals. A similar trap was laid for them, as McGowen pointed out in so many words, when Lyne, an old parliamentary hand, rose in righteous indignation and moved a vote of censure on the Government for "paying for or granting other remuneration for morning sittings and again for afternoon sittings to members of the Royal Commission on the Dean Inquiry." Lyne knew his Labourites and knew their love of making trouble over the payment of public money to high officials; but he failed to see that the Party knew its Lyne and, refusing to be drawn, voted on the issue solidly for Reid. When the Party could protest without bringing down the Government, it hardly ever failed so to do, as it had done when the Parkes grant was proposed in May 1896.

The parliamentary education of the Labour Party leaders was, however, still far from complete, as may be seen from a characteristic debate in the Assembly on 25th August 1896. McGowen had moved that:

1. The commercial and financial unrest consequent upon the uncertainty of the tenure of any fiscal policy calls for the immediate taking of a plebiscite vote upon the advisability of the present

policy remaining unaltered for a period of five years.

2. That in the event of a majority declaring themselves against the present policy and in favour of a Protection tariff, immediate action be taken to adjust the fiscal policy in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people.

McGowen's lengthy speech in introducing his motion is an admirable specimen of Labour Party oratory at this time. It was long-winded, serious, conscientious, full of undigested statistics, yet with an incisive faculty of getting right down to the rock-bed of certain departments of reality, but betraying a signal degree of administrative inexperience. The Opposition gladly followed the Labour leader and congratulated the Party on the independent tone it was at last adopting. The fate of the Government was sealed if the question came to a vote, as, with the help of the Labour Party, the Opposition could outvote the Government. Reid's obvious course was to avoid a division, and, equal to the occasion, he decisively intervened at the proper moment. "No doubt," he said, "the fiscal strife had been a great handicap to progress . . . but that word 'immediate' did not seem to be in harmony with the public interest. Surely the honourable gentleman would be the last in that Chamber to have such a momentous issue decided with the electoral rolls in the state they stood at the present time. Why, if a General Election were to be held at the present time, thousands of men would be disfranchised! The fact that the House was passing a Bill to amend the Electoral Law meant that a number of radical amendments were necessary in the electoral system to give the mass of the people a chance of being heard! . . . Let the Referendum be postponed till the General Election." "Will you pledge yourself to do that?" asked McGowen, falling an easy prey. "I will support the motion on those lines," answered the Premier. Lyne arose in wrath. The action taken by the mover was extraordinary; having decided in caucus for an immediate Referendum, he now was prepared to see it deferred to the General Election.

He would test the sincerity of the Labour Party by moving for an immediate dissolution. This of course was not permissible, and it was then moved that "the Government be requested to take steps for carrying out the foregoing resolution at the first suitable opportunity." The Opposition set its face against the addition, which, however, was carried by a substantial majority, the Government and the Labour Party voting in the same lobby.

It is impossible to say that the Labour Party was not sincere in its demand for a fiscal Referendum; this had been a proposal much favoured by it from its first entry into Parliament; but it argues much ignorance of legislative procedure to imagine that a Referendum could be taken at a General Election, or at any other time, without an Act of Parliament. Reid, of course, was aware of this, but made no attempt to obtain the necessary parliamentary authority, and two years later, when the General Election was in sight, the promised Referendum was as far off as ever. This outwitting of the Labour Party was not accepted without resentment by some of its members, and was remembered and avenged a little later.

When Reid's second Parliament was dissolved, and the Labour Party took stock of the concessions it had so far obtained, its satisfaction must have been considerably modified by a contemplation of the fate of the schemes for the abolition of the Upper House, for the establishment of compulsory arbitration, and for the taking of a trial Referendum to determine the fiscal policy for the ensuing five years. In various other ways the Party saw the repeatedly declared will of the majority of the Assembly thwarted by the Council, and there was a lurking suspicion in the minds of some of its members that if Reid had had any real political convictions or any genuine enthusiasm for reform, much more would have been accomplished. The malcontents complained that he had a way of making a single plausible effort to carry out his promise in one direction or another, and then, when he found the way blocked by the situation of parties or the temper of the

ouncil, to drop the matter. So it had been with the local Government Bill, the demand for which had been his chief stock-in-trade since he entered politics; so also with compulsory arbitration, the reform of the Legislative Council, and other Bills dear to the Labour Party.

Reid would have gone arm-in-arm to the poll with the Labour Party, if that had been permitted, but the Labour candidates, as a rule, found that Ministerial aid was distasteful to the local Leagues, and the amount of explanation which the Labour members had to give, as to their supposed alliance with the Government, showed that many of their supporters were getting tired of the Reid Administration and its tactics. These signs of a new phase in politics were astly emphasized by the result of the polls. The Government suffered a woful diminution in the number of its pledged supporters, as out of a House of 125 it could claim only 45 votes, while the Opposition numbered 61, and the Labour Party 19. In addition to this disastrous numerical decrease, Reid suffered the loss of three of his colleagues, the labourizing Garrard, Sydney Smith, and Gould. It was Reid now who could do nothing without Labour support, and in a more certain sense than ever before Labour was the pivot of the House. Three circumstances, however, should be noticed. Eleven of the Labour men were Free Traders and formed a majority in caucus, so that the Party was bound to vote solidly with Reid and give him a small majority on any fiscal division; secondly, since both the official parties in the House were avowedly 'federalist, Labour's only chance of influencing the Federal situation was to support Reid; and thirdly, until Federation was out of the way, Labour could not afford to allow Reid to be beaten, for then Barton would secure the support of many Reidites and would come in with a majority independently of Labour.

These considerations governed the situation to all appearances. But there was another, more serious still, which became of the highest importance when Federation had been finally disposed of and the field was open

for local issues. There were two factions in the Labour Party in Parliament whose divergence of view became very marked after the elections of August 1898. One of these factions, called the "solid six," comprising Hughes, Dacey, Holman, Edden, Thompson, and Thomas, was dissatisfied in general with the amount of "betterment legislation" obtained from the Reid Government, particularly with the easy way in which it was inclined to drop Bills not favoured by the Legislative Council, and desired to see Reid thrown out of office as soon as possible. The other faction, which included McGowen, Watson, Griffith, and others, about eight all told, was in favour of supporting Reid's Government, which was entirely at the mercy of the Labour vote and therefore likely to march to the Labour tune. There were three members not pledged to either faction, and two others representing mining constituencies who were drawn to the six by reason of the fact that Edden and Thompson, also mining representatives, were of the Party hostile to Reid and powerful factors in the Newcastle district. Now, as the action of the caucus was determined by a majority of votes at a special meeting called whenever the question of the fate of the Government was to be decided, Reid was never altogether sure whether he would remain in office or be relegated to the Opposition benches, until the chairman of the Labour Party announced the decision of that Party to the Legislative Assembly. During Reid's third Parliament the vote in the caucus in his support rose on some occasions to thirteen against six; but sometimes the solid six were reinforced by the two mining members to whom reference has been made, and by another, not always the same, member; and so the vote was ten to nine. Hence the gibe sometimes thrown at Reid that he was in power not by a majority in Parliament but by a majority of one in the Labour Party caucus.

There was one other factor worth referring to before a consideration of the political developments of the period is again taken up. This concerned the characters of Barton and Lyne. Barton was not an energetic man;

moreover, he was an idealist whose mind was fixed upon Federation. Lyne was a somewhat unintelligent parliamentary craftsman; and while there was nothing to be hoped for from Barton, everything could be gained from Lyne if the Party could compel him to find it convenient to continue the labourizing policy of Reid.

The position of the Government was so weak at the opening of the new Parliament that it had been expected that Reid would attempt to seal the bonds that connected the Labour members with the Ministry by offering the vacant portfolios of Smith and Garrard to members of that Party, the names of McGowen and Cann being suggested. The Labour Party was alive, however, to the danger of being "eaten up"; and if they had not been, the proceedings of the conference of May 1895 stood in the way of any member accepting office except in a purely Labour Ministry. Reid therefore reconstructed his Ministry from amongst his own following.

The parliamentary history of the years 1898-1901 is the history of the Labour Party, now attained to years of discretion, using its position as the arbiter of the fate of both political parties, to forward its own political aims to the very limits of the concessions obtainable.

The first matter of importance dealt with by Parliament was the Federal resolutions moved by Reid on 31st August 1898; to these Lyne moved an amendment, which amounted to a vote of censure. But where Federation was concerned Reid was safe, and the Government secured what it called "a glorious victory" by four votes. Meanwhile Labour was endeavouring to amend the Constitution Bill and bring it into accord with its own view, and McGowen was able to carry the three important amendments that his Party desired to have made. Two of these amendments were carried against the Government, and all by very large majorities. This success of the Labour Party in nowise affected the credit of the Government, Federation being treated by the Legislative Assembly as an open question, but Reid had not

to wait long for a display of power which greatly humiliated him in the eyes of the country and showed his complete dependence on the vote of the Labour Party. On 2nd November 1898, he, as Treasurer, made his financial statement and announced that duties were to be placed on tea, coffee, chicory, chocolate, cocoa, and rice. The Labour Party at once met in caucus to discuss the situation. Reid's scheme of taxation was distasteful to the whole Party, which professed a sentimental regard for a free breakfast-table. The more extreme members of the Party were for requiring the Government to obtain the necessary revenue by an increase in the death duties; the moderates wished to avoid harassing the Government over the budget, as they were not desirous of playing into the hands of the Opposition. The first caucus meeting on the subject separated without coming to a decision and for some days the situation was obscure. On 10th November, however, Barton simplified matters for the Party by moving a vote of censure on the Government for raising the fiscal question before Federation had been settled. Another caucus meeting was held, at which the majority decided that nothing was to be gained at this juncture by putting the Government out. The policy of the Party was to keep the Constitution Bill in the control of Reid and dispose of it as soon as possible; any other course might lead to a coalition of Federalists, with a majority sufficiently large to enable it to dispense with the support of Labour members. Accordingly when the division was taken the Party voted against Barton and saved the Government. While agreeing to support Reid as against Barton, the caucus decided against the tea, coffee, and rice duties; Reid sought to save his face by suggesting to the Labour leader that if there was no opposition to the tea-duty, part of the revenue from that tax would be devoted to the establishment of an old-age pensions fund. Old-age pensions constituted the fourth plank of the Labour platform, and Reid's suggestion had therefore to be considered. The caucus decided

against its acceptance and McGowen moved the reduction of the tea-duty from 3d. to 1d. per lb., the 1d. being retained in order that the authorities might be able to control the quality of the tea imported. The Opposition joined the Labour Party and the tax on tea was fixed at 1d. "for quality's sake." McGowen then moved the omission of the duty on rice; in this he was also successful, and the humiliated Premier then moved "that the sugar duties continue as in operation," but he had already been advised of the attitude to be taken by the Labour Party and the duties were passed with little opposition.

This independence of the Labour Party, following its consistent support during the previous Parliament, boded ill for the future of the Ministry. Reid therefore determined on a special effort to regain the good graces of his Labour allies, during the few weeks left before the session closed for the Christmas vacation. Watson, a prominent member of the Party, was nominated for the Public Works Committee; on 6th December 1898 a Bill was introduced for determining the value of lands to incoming tenants; next day the Minister of Labour moved the first reading of an Early Closing Bill, and Reid himself reintroduced that old and well-tried favourite, "a Bill for the Prevention and Settlement of Trade Disputes." But the spell was now broken; Griffith's speech on the second reading of the last-named measure bluntly showed the suspicion entertained of Reid and the confidence of the Labour Party in the security of its own position. "We would like to know whether the Government will really force the Bill through the Upper House. . . . Is the Government in dead earnest in its desire to put the Bill on the Statute Book of the Colony? The Labour Party has supported the Government for the sake of getting legislation such as this. What has the Labour Party got in the four years it has supported the Government? . . . The Government has given them legislation hastily thrown together as this Bill is. The measure is not merely inadequate and thrown together and I am afraid the Government is not sincere in

its desire to pass it into law." The Early Closing Bill was not more politely received. Watson described it as neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. Hughes said it would cause the maximum of irritation with the minimum of benefit. The Trades Disputes Bill and a new Navigation Act Amendment Bill were sent to the Council on 20th December and immediately hung up. Such was the position when Christmas intervened.

The appointment of new members to the Legislative Council was decided upon during the recess, and Reid had an opportunity of conciliating the Labour interest which he did not neglect. When the names of the new councillors were announced it was seen that four of them were staunch supporters of the Labour Party. Estell was president of the Newcastle District Miners' Federation, James Wilson was president of the Political Labour League, Hepburn was a member of the Trades and Labour Council, and Buzacott had been prominent in connexion with the Australian Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Miners' Association. These appointments were received without enthusiasm by the Labour Party. The additions to the Council would not make that body democratic. Why appoint ten members when thirty would be necessary to make the majority required to pass Labour legislation? In any circumstance it was better to let the Council die out than give it life by the introduction of a new and vigorous element. Such was the sort of criticism levelled at Reid by the rank and file of the Party.

During the recess Reid had gone to Melbourne to meet the other Premiers, with a view to coming to an agreement that would make the Constitution Bill acceptable to the people of New South Wales. He had submitted to the Conference the amendments suggested by the New South Wales Parliament, prominent amongst which were the three suggestions of the Labour Party; but on his return to Sydney it was found that he had brought back a very mangled set of resolutions. The capital was not to be in Sydney, nor was the Labour proposal that the constitu-

tion should be amended by a mass vote retained. The first thought of the Labour Party was to offer the strongest opposition to the Enabling Bill, but on reflection it was thought best to let the Bill go to the country. Various considerations weighed with the Party in coming to this decision. The first was that it would be helpless in the matter should the Federalists in the Government and Opposition Parties vote together, as they would do on the Enabling Bill; a second was that Labour, as an advanced Democratic Party, could hardly plead that the sanctity of resolutions, passed by the Legislative Assembly and the Council, was greater than that of the Bill, of which they disapproved, if it passed what was the supreme test in their eyes—that of a popular Referendum; and a last reason was that until Federation was out of the way the Party could not hope to squeeze any more concessions out of the Government.

The Enabling Bill did not improve the relations between the Government and its allies, but the majority of the Labour Party was determined that Reid should be retained in office until the constitutional question was disposed of; when therefore Fegan, an Independent Labour representative, moved an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, expressing regret that no mention was made of certain subjects Labour was notoriously interested in and anxious to have legislation upon, the Party refused to support the amendment lest the decision on the Enabling Bill should be delayed. The Bill authorizing the Referendum in regard to the constitution was passed and Parliament was almost immediately adjourned until the vote was taken. The Referendum was in favour of the constitution, 107,420 voting for, and 82,741 against its acceptance, and so far as concerned the New South Wales Parliament the question was finally disposed of.

The Labour Party now determined that it should have its full reward for supporting the Government, else Reid would have to give way to a more pliable Premier. The previous session had seen the passing of the Trades Disputes

(Conciliation) Bill through the Assembly, and before Parliament adjourned for the Federal Referendum pressure was brought to bear on the Government to have the Bill dealt with as soon as possible by the Council, as three important industrial disputes were then unsettled. On 18th April 1899 a message was sent by the Assembly to the Council asking that the Bill should be proceeded with, and, the Council being agreeable, the Bill was read a third time on 20th April. The Bill as passed by the Assembly empowered the Minister of Labour to direct inquiry into an actual or threatened difference between employer and employed, to bring the parties together for consultation, and, on failure of agreement, to appoint an arbitrator to inquire into the matter, with power to enforce the attendance of witnesses, and to enter and view the place in respect of which the dispute had occurred. This was not a very great advance along the path of compulsory arbitration, yet it satisfied the majority of the parliamentary Labour Party. The Council, however, amended the Bill by allowing a public inquiry on the application of one of the parties only, and deprived the arbitrator, who was to be a judge of the Supreme Court, or of a district Court, of access to the books and documents of either side.

The solid six of the Labour Party were now more convinced than ever that the ability of the Reid Government to serve the cause of Labour was of little worth. The new session of Parliament following the Federal Referendum opened on 18th July 1899, and it was evident that Reid felt the keenest anxiety to conciliate his restless allies, as he well might, seeing that the Premier of New South Wales, when the Commonwealth came into being, would most certainly be the first Prime Minister of Australia. The Ministerial programme was calculated to please the most captious Labour critic. The Early Closing Bill, the Friendly Societies Bill, and the Navigation Bill were to be reintroduced; a new Land Bill would make provision for the reappraisement of conditional purchases and leases; the Local Government Bill was to be revived; a Bill to

establish a State Bank would be introduced ; and " the system of old-age pensions which aims at saving the aged poor from the brand of pauperism, and which Ministers propose to establish in this country, would be preceded by a Bill to be laid before Parliament in a few days providing relief for the victims of accidents in mines, and for their dependent relatives, out of a joint fund contributed by the miners, the mine-owners, and the State."

The Government was not fated to make much progress with this programme of measures. On 16th August the estimates of expenditure were laid on the table of the Assembly. In those estimates occurred an item of £350 paid for expenses in obtaining information for the compilation of a Report on old-age pensions ; on 22nd August Edden, a member of the Labour Party and one of the solid six, asked a question concerning this payment, when the fact was elicited that the money had already been paid to J. C. Neild, a member of the Assembly. As a matter of privilege Edden, the same night, moved that Neild's seat had become vacant by reason of his having accepted an office of profit under the Crown, and after a highly excited debate the question of the payment of the money was referred to a Select Committee for investigation and report. On 23rd August, before the Select Committee could bring up its Report, Hughes, another of the solid six, moved the adjournment of the Assembly to draw attention to the payment by the Government of fees for professional services to one of its supporters. The motion was negatived on the voices, but the fact that it had been moved by a prominent Labour member while the Neild case was under discussion prompted the Opposition to attack the Government with a direct vote of censure, and Lyne announced his intention of moving such a motion. On the day set down for the censure motion the Select Committee brought up its Report, which declared that Neild had not accepted an office of profit and his seat was therefore not vacated ; but the Committee expressed the opinion " that the practice of the acceptance of payment from the

Government by members of either House of Parliament, holding commissions from the Crown, without the previous consent of Parliament, is constitutionally dangerous and should be discontinued." At the same time it was given out that Neild had returned to the Treasury the sum that had been paid to him. The discussion on Lyne's censure motion now began; it had not proceeded far when the Opposition discovered that a general motion of censure was likely to fail, and its leading members awoke to the expedient of adding to the motion a specific censure in regard to the payment of money to Neild. During the debate the focus of interest was not the Assembly, but the Labour caucus. The meetings of the caucus were ostensibly secret, but it is evident that both Government and Opposition were well informed as to what happened thereat. The extremists of the Labour Party were very anxious to throw Reid out of office, and at the first vote in the caucus they gained a majority over to their views, but a second meeting was called to consider a further amendment that had been proposed in the interest of the Government; at this meeting the partisans of the Government were in a majority and the decision of the Party to support the Lyne motion was rescinded. The solid six were deeply committed against Reid over the Neild affair, but they were now face to face with a most difficult position which would severely test their loyalty to their Party. At a third meeting of the Party four of the solid six informed their colleagues that their pledge of solidarity required them to vote as the majority decided or to resign, and rather than vote for the Government on the Neild grant they preferred the alternative of resignation; one other member (Dick) indicated the likelihood of his taking the same course.

It was an open secret that apart from the Labour Party the vote on the censure motion, including pairs, would be 45 votes for the Government and 60 for the Opposition; if the whole Labour vote of 19 were cast with the Government, the voting would be 64 as against 60 for the Opposition, but if the recalcitrants were to resign as they announced,

the Government vote would be reduced to 59, and Reid would be in a minority of one. The Labour minority were therefore masters of the position. They would retain their seats only on condition that the caucus adhered to its first decision of supporting the Opposition; if the caucus refused to do this, the vote would still go to the Opposition. The possibilities of the situation were not lost on the majority of the caucus. Reid had been hitherto supported on account of his programme of Labour legislation; Lyne was now approached, and without hesitation promised all that was demanded of him in the way of similar legislation. According to Spence, one of the Party, Lyne offered to put this promise in writing so that it might be used against him in the event of his failure to give satisfaction. As it was impossible to save Reid, and as Lyne's assurances were deemed satisfactory, the caucus authorized McGowen to inform the Assembly that it was going to put the Government out. He made the announcement with obvious regret, thanking Reid for his concessions, especially for the Liberal administration of the Marine Board; he protested that the adverse vote about to be recorded would be given in no revengeful spirit, but in order to maintain the "purity of public life." It was not McGowen who spoke, but the caucus majority. Reid fell by 75 votes to 41, after a vain attempt to obtain from a young and inexperienced Governor a prorogation of Parliament,—so that the Neild case could be investigated by a Judge sitting as a Royal Commission,—or, as an alternative, a dissolution in the case of defeat.

The last chapter in the history of the New South Wales Parliamentary Labour Party, prior to the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth, may be written in a few words. With the fall of Reid interest in New South Wales politics disappeared for a time. A series of important events—the South African War and the successive despatch of the contingents; the outbreak of bubonic plague which turned almost the whole of the year 1900 into one long recess so far as Parliament was concerned; and the estab-

lishment of the Commonwealth,—would in any circumstances have distracted the public mind from local politics. Moreover, the knowledge that with the year 1901 would begin a new era in Australian politics, and that the more important men of all three parties would then withdraw to labour in another field, effectually dulled the enthusiasm alike of Ministerialists and of Opposition, taking the life out of such parliamentary warfare as was indulged in by them. But the period, though barren of animation, was full of success for the Labour Party. Its objective had been attained; Federation was disposed of and could no longer be used to distract attention from Labour demands, and a pliant Ministry was in office. Fortunate in the Ministry, the Labour Party was no less fortunate in the Opposition. Having so long proceeded with a policy of betterment while at the head of the Government, Reid could not in opposition reasonably object to the betterment policy of his opponent. On the other hand, Lyne, dependent on the Labour vote on all occasions, was bound to conduct his administration so as to please his allies. The essential factor in the history of this short period is the absolute continuity of the policies of Reid and Lyne; where Lyne did not literally carry out the measures, prepared or contemplated, of his predecessor, he differed only in going further in the direction of placating the Labour Party. When Lyne pronounced his policy speech, Reid claimed, and claimed quite rightly, that every Bill mentioned was either on the notice paper or was in process of being carried out by himself in the late session when “a slight accident” occurred.

Now that Federation had been achieved and the fiscal issue disposed of, for Lyne quickly announced that, the Commonwealth being so imminent, he would make no tariff changes, there was no longer a real division between the two parties on any matter of principle; politics during this time became more than ever a mere struggle for place between groups of members who would have had no difficulty in working together, if their personal interests

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ad urged them so to do. Meanwhile the Labour Party continued to seek concessions for its supporters, and was able to secure these without any ostentation of power, and without any public agitation. Indeed so quiet were the outward manifestations of the parliamentary party that its supporters in the constituencies began to accuse it of lack of energy, and a motion was carried at the Political Labour League Conference in January 1901 "that it is to be regretted that the Labour Party during the almost continuous recess of 1900 did little or nothing to organize or reorganize leagues, or to instruct electors on the burning questions of the day; and that the executive should immediately draw up a plan of campaign." The fact was the Labour Party had become used to the test of representation, and no further outburst of energy was to be expected until it was subjected to the test of direct opposition and, ultimately, of office.

We may now return to the doings of the Lyne Government. Almost its first administrative act of importance was the issue by the Minister for Works, on the eve of the assembling of Parliament, of a Minute fixing the minimum wage for workmen in Government employ at 7s. per diem and assigning union rates to the mechanics engaged on railway construction, thus continuing and improving upon the Labour policy of the Reid Government. In Lyne's policy speech all the familiar old watchwords crop up again, Early Closing, Navigation Act Amendment, Conciliation and Arbitration, Mining Laws' Consolidation, Overseer Settlement; the difference lay not so much in the character of the platform as in the energy with which the new men set about carrying it out.

It would be futile to consider in detail the work of the various parliamentary sessions during this period. The Labour men rarely asserted themselves, being content to watch Lyne holding office as Premier by the same expedient as his predecessor. Incidents of administration not vital to the fate of the Ministry were occasionally criticized, notably the payment to Barton for his visit to

England with the Federation Bill, but these, to use the parliamentary slang of the time, were blank-cartridge displays, intended to impress the local political leagues without inconveniencing the Government. The interest of the period consists in the actual measures passed into law, not in the political manœuvres with which they were associated. A list of notable measures affecting Labour interests is readily compiled.

The maladministration of the City of Sydney had been a matter of comment for several years, and when an outbreak of bubonic plague occurred during 1900 the City Council made a somewhat futile effort to better its administration. The division most severely affected was represented in Parliament by W. M. Hughes, who demanded a complete reorganization of the City government. A demand from such a quarter was not one to be ignored, and a Bill to reform the constitution of the City Council was without delay brought in by the Government. This Bill greatly widened the franchise and made the City government very democratic ; it also provided for the election of the Mayor by the citizens, but to this last provision the Legislative Council objected and it was abandoned. The Wharves Resumption Act was in a sense a sanitary measure rendered necessary by the outbreak of plague, but it had an obvious relevance to the Labour platform and was a measure on which the third party specially congratulated itself. Among a group of Bills introduced in connexion with the mining industry, two of importance passed into law ; these were the Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill, which embodied several new regulations for the safety of employees, and the Miners' Accident Relief Bill. The Bill last mentioned, as detailed in the Ministerial programme, provided for the administration of a fund to be raised by contributions from mine-owners, miners, and the Government, which was to be applied to the relief of persons injured by accidents in mines, and of the relatives of those who died through such accidents. An Act, granting out of the general revenues of the colony

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pensions to persons of 65 years of age and upwards, and, in certain cases, to persons between 60 and 65 years, was passed with great enthusiasm by the Assembly and assented to by the Council. A Navigation Act Amendment Act was also passed. This abolished the Marine Board, an old-established institution in Sydney, and made very drastic changes in the law in the interests of the officers and crews, and for their safety. The Bill was amended by the Council in a manner distasteful to the Labour Party, but the Assembly, at the instance of the Government, refused to entertain the amendments and the Council gave way. We notice here and in connexion with the Early Closing Bill a certain difference in the treatment of Reid by the Council and in that of Lyne. The Sydney Council Act also illustrates a new willingness to compromise on the part of the Upper House. Two Bills affecting Labour were introduced by private members and became law : Cook brought in a Bill to amend the Truck Act, and A. Griffith one to limit the attachment of wages.

But the central events in the parliamentary history of the period are two in number : the passage of the Early Closing Act at the end of 1899, with the Amending Act in 1900, and the introduction of Wise's Conciliation and Arbitration Bill in the course of 1900. Reid, it will be remembered, introduced and passed through the Assembly a Bill which limited the number of hours per week during which a shop might remain open ; Lyne, going further, stipulated the hour at which shops should close each day, and provided for a weekly half-holiday. There were other important provisions which are discussed under factory legislation, etc., but it is of interest to note that the passage of the Bill through Parliament was attended by disagreements between the two Houses which ended favourably to the proposals of the Government, the Council showing a willingness to compromise that had previously been entirely absent from its proceedings. A further effort at legislation in the interests of Labour, but not so immediately successful, was the Bill to provide for the establish-

ment of tribunals of conciliation and arbitration. Reid had instituted the principle of compulsory inquiry; Lyne, or rather his Attorney-General Wise, conceded the principle of compulsory awards. At last the Party had secured from Lyne what Reid had refused. But Lyne had no more than Reid abolished the Legislative Council, and to the new Arbitration Bill the Upper House showed scant favour, the passage into law of this central item of the Labour programme having to await the establishment of the Commonwealth.

Towards the close of 1900 a change came over the scene in the New South Wales Parliament. The Commonwealth Constitution Act received the Royal Assent on 9th July, and nearly all the members of the Assembly who had a prominent place in the public eye quitted local politics for the larger and more important field opened out to them by Federation. With the establishment of the Commonwealth a new era began for Labour.

VICTORIA

In January 1893 the Shiels Ministry was overthrown and Patterson became Premier. The defeat of Shiels deprived the Labour Party, now reduced to ten members, of all influence in the Victorian Parliament. It occupied seats on the Opposition side, but the leading men of the Opposition supported Patterson's policy of retrenchment, and in fact no other policy was open to a Government with a falling revenue and unable to borrow either in London or in Australia. This the Labour Party recognized and refrained from criticizing in Parliament the Government policy. In view of the appalling disasters which seemed to threaten the colony, Parliament made no pretence of dealing with general legislation, only matters urgently demanded by the circumstances of the times being considered; amongst these was a Bill for the establishment of a labour colony at Leongatha and of various village settlements. This Bill was favoured by

the Labour Party as a practical measure directed to relieve the labour market, and so became law. Whatever good was to come out of these settlements was a thing of the future; the general stoppage of public works was of present concern, as large numbers of men were thrown out of employment, and the Labour members, unable to do anything in Parliament for the relief of the consequent distress, made an attempt outside Parliament to popularize a demand for a return to a moderate policy of public works. In the meantime the crisis had come and the working men of the colony, knowing better than their advisers that a public works policy of any kind was impossible, refused to join in the demand.

In January 1894 an intercolonial conference of Labour was held in Sydney, and Bromley, Trenwith, Winter, and Maloney attended as representatives of Victoria. The subject of unemployment having been introduced, Mr. Maloney asked the conference to affirm "that it is the first duty of the Government to look after the welfare of its people and provide work for those willing to work." It was significant of the times that such a resolution, embodying one of the commonest affirmations of Labour principles, should have found little support in a company of Labour representatives. It was not that the expenditure of public money for the purpose of increasing employment would not have been welcome, but that the Labour representatives of some of the colonies did not wish to put forward a public demand for such expenditure. There was undoubtedly a disposition on the part of those who had suffered through the financial disasters of 1892-93 to assume that a great part of the responsibility for their troubles lay at the door of the labouring classes, whose senseless agitation and frequent strikes had unsettled the minds of the creditors of the banks and other institutions, and so brought on a panic. The unreasonableness of this has been sufficiently demonstrated, yet its constant reiteration had some effect in dissuading the Labour members from raising the question of unemployment very strongly.

in Parliament; but to refrain from identifying themselves with the unemployed agitation would have been tantamount to abdicating their functions, and outside Parliament the principal Labour members took a leading part in an endeavour to influence public opinion in the direction of the increase of public works.

On 20th February 1894 there was a meeting of the unemployed at Richmond, Melbourne, at which Bennett, Trenwith, and Hancock were the principal speakers, and the necessity of Government measures to relieve distress was very strongly urged; at Ballarat a fortnight later there was a large public meeting convened by the Trades and Labour Council, which resolved that it was "absolutely necessary that Parliament should be immediately summoned to deal with unemployment." Such a resolution was quite meaningless, as the Council well knew. The majority of the Assembly was strong in its support of the Government's intention to keep the ordinary expenditure of the country within the income, and the Labour Party was too weak and uninfluential to force the Government from its position, even if disposed to make such attempt, so the work of cutting down expenditure went on without parliamentary criticism.

The spectacle of the deference paid to the Labour Party by the Government in New South Wales and the cordiality displayed by Kingston to the Party in South Australia contrasted with the weakness of the Labour Party in Victoria, and induced the Melbourne Trades Hall to summon a conference of all bodies interested in the Labour movement with the object of devising some method of political action so that the Liberal vote might be consolidated at the approaching General Election. This conference was held in June 1894 and led to the formation of the United Labour Party of Victoria, with a comprehensive platform covering electoral reform, revision of taxation so as to include land taxation while retaining a high protective tariff, social reform, and a scheme of federation. The organization was to include all trades and

labour bodies, democratic and working men's clubs, and all persons who gave their adherence to the platform.

At the beginning of August 1894 the Treasurer, Downes Carter, introduced the financial scheme of the Government to meet the changed conditions of the colony arising out of the crisis. It was proposed that the customs tariff on a large number of articles should be reduced to 10 per cent *ad valorem* and that the excise duty on tobacco and sugar should be raised. These overtures brought up the old fiscal controversy in an acute form, and the "Liberal and Labour" Party at once became very active in its opposition to the Government proposals. On 6th August Graham Berry presided at a meeting held under the auspices of the Protectionist Liberal and Labour League, at which Trenwith, supported by Bromley and Prendergast, proposed a motion calling on "the Liberal members of the Legislature to combine for the purpose of placing in power a Government that will give effect to the wishes of the people." On the following day the Government withdrew its customs and excise proposals, but announced its intention of proceeding with its scheme of retrenchment, of making still further reductions in the salaries of all civil servants, including even the smallest, and of discharging from the railway service about five hundred men. The Labour Party opposed the reduction of salaries below £150 a year and the retrenchment in the railway service, and when Turner from the Opposition benches moved a vote of no-confidence in the Government the Labour members gave him their strong support. The discussion extended over a fortnight, and on a division being taken the Government found itself in a minority of four. Patterson was entitled to a dissolution and a General Election took place.

Turner, in his capacity of leader of the Opposition, was the first to put forward a programme. He had been Commissioner of Trade and Customs when the increased tariff had been imposed in 1892. He claimed, however, that he had not given it a whole-hearted support and

was now prepared to submit the question of revision to a commission. He did not apparently look for much additional revenue from any revision that might be sanctioned, and proposed a tax on surplus wealth to obtain what was needed to balance the finances of the colony. Turner's utterances on the tariff question were so vague that, while he was claimed by the *Argus* as a tariff reformer, he did not part company with the Liberal and Labour section, which was demanding the retention or increase of the high tariff already in existence.

When Patterson issued his manifesto he asked for "a mandate to reduce, without interfering with the Protective policy of the country, such prohibitive duties as have seriously affected revenue and commerce." He also declared for direct taxation by means of an income and absentee tax, and for electoral reform including a decrease of members in both Houses of the Legislature. Any meaning might be read into this declaration on the subject of the tariff. To any one who desired to make it so, it was quite consistent with the manifesto issued by the Labour Party, but as the election progressed Patterson considered that the prospects warranted his being more definite, and said many things which seemed to pledge him to a general tariff reduction. On the eve of the election his name was included among those recommended for election by the Central Reform Committee, in company with others who were convinced Free Traders. From this list, however, several of Patterson's party were excluded on account of their Protectionist leanings.

Turner maintained his vagueness to the close of the electoral campaign. If he had any opinions in regard to the tariff, he effectually concealed them, meeting criticism by a declaration that he would refer the question of changes in the tariff to a commission. Speaking on the eve of the election, he said "he had advocated one tax, that on surplus wealth, but he had told the electors all through that if the people thought some other form of taxation was best, he would not be particular about his own proposal."

his pliability was his best recommendation in leading the heterogeneous crowd who formed the Opposition.

The policy of the Labour Party was laid down by Trenwith at the opening of the electoral campaign. The object of customs duties, he declared, was to protect native industries, the few duties remaining in the tariff which had no protective effect should be removed, any additional revenue required being obtained by direct taxation. In general politics, particular stress was laid upon universal suffrage, but the ordinary programme of the Party was not neglected. In 1892 the Party had contested thirty-six seats, but had secured only one-third of them. Its lack of success on that occasion had been attributed to the circumstance that its electoral appeal had been made to labour alone, and its leaders now decided on an alliance with the Liberals, by which they hoped to have better support both in town and country. An agreement was come to by the joint Liberal and Labour leaders that Liberals who favoured the Labour platform should not be opposed, a similar forbearance being extended by the Liberals to Labour candidates. In accordance with this agreement, the executive committee of the United Labour Party authorized Hancock to announce that the Labour Party would not oppose certain members of the Opposition who had "voted very consistently against the Patterson Government," and on 13th September a definite list was published of eighteen candidates for metropolitan constituencies whom the Council of the Party had decided to commend to the "Liberal and labouring classes" for their support. The list included the names of Bromley, James Cook, Hancock, Prendergast, Winter, Maloney, Langster, Trenwith, Bennett, and Styles, who were Labour candidates, as well as Graham Berry, Deakin, Best, Longmore, Tucker, and Ievers, who were not in the Labour ranks. Morris, who had announced his determination to stand for Essendon and Flemington as a Labour candidate in opposition to Deakin, was at once repudiated by the Party, and thus deprived of all chance of success. Out-

side Melbourne, the Labour Party was not in a position to exercise much influence in the constituencies. Its support of six candidates was announced ; these were contesting mining districts, and were not all members of the Party. In any case only two were returned ; one of these was Burton, who was elected for Stawell and was the only Labour member, properly so termed, who did not represent a metropolitan constituency. The election, which was held on 20th September 1894, resulted in the complete discomfiture of the Patterson party. Twenty-nine Ministerialists only were returned, and among the defeated candidates were three Ministers ; there were fifty Opposition members and sixteen of the Labour Party. In a House of ninety-five there were thirty-eight members who had declared for a high tariff ; included in these were nearly all the Labour Party. The great majority of the new Parliament was pledged to some form of tariff revision, and many to a return to the 25 per cent tariff.

Patterson resigned as soon as the result of the election was clear and Turner became Premier. In forming his Ministry Turner still took up no well-defined attitude on the tariff question. He included among his colleagues a few so-called Free Traders—McLean, who had protested against the 50 per cent tariff, and Sargood, who had presided over a meeting of the Reform League during the elections—but these were offset by others of well-known Protectionist leanings.

During the elections the *Melbourne Age* had claimed that the Labour members did not constitute a separate Party, but were a wing of the Liberal Party taking a special interest in Labour matters, just as others were specially interested in temperance or other questions. This was to a considerable extent true. The more prominent of the parliamentary Labour group seemed more concerned for the maintenance of high protection than for the introduction of a policy of betterment, and in this respect could only be distinguished from Liberals by the more emphatic character of their views. Nevertheless,

no member of the Party was asked to join the Government, and the Party itself did not become merged in the Liberal ranks. In the Assembly a few Labour members occupied seats on the back Ministerial benches, but the majority sat together in what was termed the Ministerial corner.

The financial policy of the Government as stated to Parliament was "stringent economy in all departments, aided by direct taxation"; this was unfolded to mean the reduction of salaries, of municipal endowments, and of the estimates generally, the taxation of unimproved land values, an absentee tax, and the taxation of incomes derived from other sources than land. The tariff was touched only by the removal of the primage duty of 1 per cent imposed by Patterson on all imports and exports, as it was found to be injurious to Melbourne's intercolonial trade. The revision of the tariff, as well as the difficult questions of the administration of the railways so as to make them profitable and of the establishment of a State Bank, was shelved for a time, by the appointment of Royal Commissions to consider and report upon them. But the Government at once brought in its Bills imposing land and income taxes and these had the hearty support of the Labour members.

The election returns appeared to give the Government a majority of five over the Opposition and Labour members combined, but the Government soon found that it could not rely on the constant support of all its nominal adherents. Its real position was shown when divisions were taken in the Assembly on important questions of policy; thus, a motion that "the Government Budget proposals are unsatisfactory" was defeated by twenty-two votes, and the voting on an amendment disapproving of the proposed land tax resulted in a Government majority of fourteen only. On both these occasions the Labour members voted with the Government, but when the Party was against its proposals, as was the case when Turner moved to reduce the salaries of members of Parliament, the result was usually disastrous for the Government.

The Ministry therefore had to steer its course with due regard to the opinions of the Labour Party. In the case just mentioned Turner spoke of resigning, and it was thought that the Labour members would promise better behaviour in future ; but whatever understanding, if any, was arrived at, it was not disclosed, and Turner remained Premier, holding office practically by the goodwill, or rather by the tolerance, of the Labour corner.

The taxation proposals of the Government were well supported by the Labour members and passed through the Assembly, where the necessity of new sources of revenue was well recognized, but they were promptly rejected by the Council, which objected to the imposition of a land tax at such a time. This tax had been accepted by the Assembly somewhat grudgingly, but it was by no means popular in the constituencies, and Turner, when he brought in a new taxation Bill, dropped the land tax proposals and amended the income tax so as to include all incomes above £200 a year, whether derived from land or other sources ; in this form it was accepted by both Houses, and Parliament was adjourned in January 1895.

Turner had avoided discussing the fiscal question during the elections by undertaking to appoint a Commission to report to Parliament what changes ought to be made in the tariff. Not long after he attained office, a Tariff Board, as it was called, was appointed, and Turner showed his usual astuteness by appointing as Commissioners persons whose opinions it was thought reflected those of the majority of the Assembly. The Board got through its work with some speed and its Report was ready when Parliament met again at the end of May. This Report favoured many reductions in the duties levied under the tariff of 1892. Trenwith and Bromley, who were members of the Tariff Board, had signed the Report after having at first refused to do so, but their signing was under protest as they knew a reduction of duties would be ill received by the members of their Party. As soon as the recommendations in regard to the tariff were known, and before

Parliament met, the Trades Hall Council passed a resolution "emphatically protesting against the recommendations of the Tariff Board as being calculated to injure and possibly to destroy several important industries." This resolution put an end to the prospect of important reductions being made in the tariff. The Trades Hall Council and the Labour Party were of one mind in regard to Protection, and the opposition of the Party would render it impossible for the Government to hope to carry through any measure for the reduction of duties. It was soon apparent that the Government might be acquitted of any such intention. In the Governor's speech, at the opening of the new parliamentary session, the Government made a very determined bid for the support of the Labour Party. The revision of the tariff was to be undertaken at once, and it was laid down that "it is now generally admitted that the colony must make every effort to encourage the production of such articles as can be successfully exported"; a measure to create a State Bank in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission of which Winter had been chairman was to be brought forward, and an amendment of the Factories Act "so as to check the practice of sweating." Electoral reform, establishing the principle of "one man, one vote," was also promised. The influence of the Labour Party was clearly seen in the course of the tariff revision. Several members of the Government, as well as many of its supporters, were pledged to a general reduction of duties, yet the changes made in the tariff were of a very unimportant character, involving small reductions or reductions on insignificant items, far different from what was proposed by the Tariff Board.

In September 1895 the amending Factories and Shops Bill made its appearance. In its first form it was dictated by the wishes of the Labour Party, and embodied the recommendations of the Inquiry Board which had been appointed to consider the competition of Chinese in the furniture trade and the existence of sweating in the

clothing trades. It provided that any single Chinese worker in the furniture or laundry trades should constitute a "factory" and should therefore be registered and come under supervision as to hours and conditions of work. So far as the Chinese were concerned the Bill became law without change, but several of the provisions directed against "sweating," by which term the payment of low wages was meant, whether or not accompanied by sub-contracting, roused great opposition and led to a long dispute between the two Houses of the Legislature. The Bill provided for the fixing of a minimum scale of wages in the clothing and furniture trades by boards containing representatives of employers and employed; and, in order that the minimum wage might be more easily and certainly enforced, it proposed to reduce home workers to a minimum number. The Melbourne trade unionists had long desired to abolish home work in the clothing trades, knowing by experience that the home worker was rarely a loyal trade unionist and generally a ready instrument for employers who wished to cut down wages. The abolition of home work would therefore have been welcome to them apart from the minimum wage provisions of the Bill. It was also enacted that no persons should be given work to be done at home, unless domestic circumstances or physical infirmity prevented their going into the factory or workshop, in which cases they could apply for permits to work at home, which might be granted after inquiry. The Council argued that this provision was tyrannical, as there was no adequate reason for driving into the factories all women who desired to earn money in the ready-made clothing trade; and in the Assembly the Bill was so far modified that the issue of permits was made contingent merely on public registration of the home workers who required them. The Council, however, resolutely opposed the passing of the Bill even in this form, insisting that if there were to be registers of home workers, they should be accessible only to the persons administering the Factories Act and not open to general inspection. As the Council

would not give way and the Government could not concede any point without the concurrence of their Labour allies, the session came to an end without further progress being made with the Bill. The short recess which followed was used by the Labour Party, and to some extent by the Government also, in an attempt to foment an agitation against the Council. This met with little success. Public opinion was on the whole unmoved by the demands of the Labour orators; where there was any strong feeling, it went out to the home workers whose means of livelihood seemed likely to be taken from them. Recognizing this, the Labour Party made no further difficulty as to the Council's demands, and when Parliament met again the Bill was speedily passed, the amendment in regard to home workers being accepted. The concurrence of the Party was, however, conditional on the Government lending its support to a private Bill which proposed to refer matters at issue between the Assembly and the Council to a Referendum.

In October 1896 the Government introduced a State Bank Bill which provided for the amalgamation of savings and post office banks, for the issue of loans on the *crédit foncier* system, and for the issue of a paper currency. The opposition to giving the bank the right to issue notes was so formidable that the Government speedily withdrew that part of the Bill, retaining only the portion relating to the savings banks and the *crédit foncier*; in this form it became law.

It will be seen that the Labour Party could rightly claim some very substantial results from its alliance with the Turner Government; that alliance was now extended to the election of representatives to the Federal Convention. In order to meet the Government in regard to Federation the Party found itself compelled to modify its programme in respect to the constitution of the Legislature, and to agree to advocate a Senate or State House as well as a House of Representatives, with a Referendum in case of dispute between them, instead of the single Chamber

which it would have greatly preferred. The alliance was so far successful that Trenwith was elected to the Convention, the only Labour representative in that distinguished gathering.

In September 1897 the Victorian Parliament was dissolved, having run almost to the limit of its three years' course. The Labour Party had carried on an active campaign in Melbourne and the larger towns for some months in anticipation of the elections and was ready to put forward a large number of candidates in its interest. It would not have been unwilling to have an understanding with the Government in regard to the elections, but Turner, who had no real sympathy with Labour and had found co-operation with it very irksome, declined to make his electoral programme sufficiently advanced to meet Labour views; he was disposed rather to move in the contrary direction and conciliate the Opposition as much as possible. One of his earliest declarations was that he would lose office in preference to holding it again at the mercy of the Labour corner. He regarded the colony as having had enough "progressive" legislation and urged that it required a rest.

At the elections the Labour Party put forward twenty-one candidates, of whom nineteen obtained seats, thirteen being classed as direct Labour representatives. But with the addition of three to its numbers the Party found itself occupying a much less important position than in the late Parliament, as the Ministry was no longer dependent on its votes. The effect of the change was quickly visible when Parliament met, as the business outlined for the session proposed no social legislation of any importance. The parliamentary effectiveness of the Labour Party was further hindered by the lack of agreement among its members. Trenwith had been leader for a long time, and had come to be regarded by a section of the Party as willing to sacrifice the status and independence of Labour to maintain the alliance with Turner; indeed it was widely believed that had it not been

for the recent *rapprochement* between Turner and the Opposition, Trenwith would have joined the Government. To this cause of dissatisfaction there was added his hearty advocacy of the Commonwealth Bill, which was extremely distasteful to a considerable section of his own Party, especially to its supporters outside Parliament. In June 1898, when Parliament reopened, Hancock took an early opportunity of attacking Trenwith, and the attack was renewed at a private meeting of the Party on the following day, but the majority were still with Trenwith, who was able to retain his leadership.

The Labour Party as a rule voted with the Government, but as its support was not essential it received no special consideration, and the influence exercised by it on legislation was very slight indeed. In these circumstances the Party applied itself to preparing for the new conditions which would arise under Federation; and to provide for the direct and adequate representation of Labour in the Federal Parliament a scheme was prepared for the federation of Labour throughout the continent. But though it was thus preparing for Federation the Labour Party had done little to bring it about and its leaders were out of touch with the general feeling in Victoria on the matter. At the end of July 1899, when the vote on the revised scheme of Federation was taken, the Trades Hall Council condemned the scheme, yet every Labour constituency in the colony gave a hearty vote in favour of it, thus showing its agreement with the sentiment of the whole country.

Towards the close of 1899 there was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction amongst supporters of the Ministry in regard to the management of affairs, and on 29th November, McLean, from the back Ministerial benches, gave notice of a motion "that this House no longer retains confidence in the Government because of its administrative weakness and vacillating conduct of public business." The Opposition resolved to support this motion and the Labour Party to support the Government, but owing to the defection of a large number of Ministerialists the Govern-

ment was defeated by 47 votes to 36 and Turner resigned, having held office for a period of five years and two months.

The McLean Government, which was immediately formed, promulgated no new policy, but adopted almost in its entirety the programme of its predecessor. There had been no serious criticism of the Turner Ministry; it was its weak administration and general slackness which had furnished the excuse for a change of Government. The Labour Party had given a lukewarm support to Turner when he was in office; now that he was in Opposition it became much more closely allied with him, but it found itself still without power to influence the course of legislation.

During 1900 interest in State politics was eclipsed by the imminence of Federation, and in Victoria as in some of the other colonies the business of local politics became a struggle as to who should be in power when Federation occurred. The only development of real importance in Victorian politics at this time was the effort made by the Labour Party to ensure the representation of the town population in the Federal House in proportion to its numbers, in opposition to the McLean Government's determination to give to the country districts a larger share of representation than bare numbers would warrant. The Labour Party failed in its efforts, finding it difficult to convince the Government that the corollary of manhood suffrage was one vote, one value; such difficulty not being lessened by the circumstance that any increase in town representation would be to the advantage of Labour.

The term of Parliament expired in October 1900, and at the ensuing elections the Turner Party with its Labour allies exerted itself to the utmost. The chief point in its programme was the advocacy of a convention to reform the constitution of the Victorian Council. McLean was not opposed to a change of some kind, but he objected to the mode of procedure suggested as being unconstitutional. The electors took little interest in the controversy, McLean's personality and politics arousing no enthusiasm;

and twenty-nine members were returned without opposition. Labour had fourteen direct representatives in the new Parliament as compared with thirteen in its predecessor, and in the end the Government found itself in a minority.

At the opening of Parliament Turner called a meeting of the Opposition, which was attended by the Labour members, and a course of procedure was adopted for displacing the Government. When the Assembly met on 14th November 1900, Turner moved an amendment to the Address declaring that the House had no confidence in the Government. This was carried by 51 votes to 43, the Labour members voting with the majority. McLean resigned forthwith and once more Turner became Premier, with Trenwith as Minister of Works and Railways and Burton as Minister of Mines. These two members did not enter the Ministry as the sign of a definite coalition of the Ministerial and Labour Parties, but merely as individuals, and Trenwith resigned his post as leader of the Labour Party in consequence of becoming a Minister. But the Labour Party was perfectly prepared to see Trenwith accept a portfolio. He had been present at the opening of the electoral campaign when Turner unfolded his programme and had endorsed it. Both Trenwith and Burton were returned without opposition when they went to their constituencies after receiving their appointments, and no voice was raised in disapproval of what they had done, the Labour Party being inclined to regard their acceptance of office as indicating an access of strength to its own ranks. In the middle of December 1900, at a social entertainment given by the North Melbourne branch of the Liberal and Labour Party of Victoria, at which Prendergast, Trenwith, Burton, and Maloney were present, Prendergast described the Labour Party as consisting of "twelve members with two additional in the Ministry," and warned the Party not to be unfair in expecting too much of the Government at the start because it contained Trenwith and Burton, but to give these Ministers "as fair

a show as they gave other Ministers." It has been usual in Labour circles, particularly since the Findley-Tocsin affair, when Findley, the Labour member for East Melbourne, was expelled from the Victorian Assembly for republishing a seditious libel on the King for which expulsion Trenwith voted, to refer to Trenwith as having "ratted." This description does not fit the circumstances of the case and is unfair to Trenwith. It was clearly anticipated throughout the election of 1900 that if the Turner party were successful, Trenwith would receive office in the new Government, and there is abundant contemporary evidence, besides what has already been given, to show that Labour as a whole was well pleased with Trenwith's advancement.

The foregoing account shows that the Labour Party exercised a very considerable influence upon politics in Victoria from 1894 to 1900. In Parliament it consisted of a small body of practical men, several of them trade union officials, who applied themselves in a most business-like manner to obtain the measures they thought desirable in the interest of their class. They differed greatly from their friends in New South Wales in that they made no strong professions or demonstrations of power, being content to support the Party to which they were allied without embarrassing it publicly and demanding as the price of their support a modification of its programme. The Victorian Labour Party had no real strength outside Melbourne. Within that city it received the steady but not altogether uncritical support of the artisans and labourers, but it was quite out of touch with the extreme and ardent Socialist opinion which existed there and held the Labour Party in even greater contempt than other political parties. In the pastoral and mining districts of Victoria there was a considerable body of men whose views very much resembled those of the same class in Queensland. In that colony they formed the backbone of the Labour Party, but in Victoria they showed no enthusiasm for the Victorian Labour Party and brought

it no success at the polls. In fact the Labour Party in Victoria from 1892 to 1900 was not so much a separate and distinct Party as the most advanced section of the Liberal Party. Its members were bound together by adherence to a special platform, which did not differ materially from the old Liberal platform put forward twenty years before by Graham Berry. The strong Protectionist views which they entertained affected their political life very decidedly and made it difficult for them to work with men who were not Protectionists. This affected their relations with the Labour Party in New South Wales very much, and though Victoria sent delegates to the intercolonial conferences held at intervals, they were not in close sympathy with the Labour element in any of the other colonies. Towards the close of the period of which we treat, there was a movement in Victoria among the rank and file of the Labour Party towards the views held in the neighbouring states, and some impatience was shown at the attitude of the Party's representatives in Parliament, but this did not develop sufficient strength to endanger their position, and the control of the Labour movement remained to the end in the hands of the trade unionists.

QUEENSLAND

From the entry of Labour in considerable force into the Queensland Assembly in 1893 to the radical changes brought about by the foundation of united Australia in 1901, Labour in Queensland passed through a period which seems, at first sight, a little amorphous in character, but which, on a more careful examination, shows certain firm lines of development. Contrasted with Labour in other colonies, the interest of the Party in Queensland arises more from the characteristics of its development than in the actual work accomplished. Thus, put side by side with that of New South Wales for example, we shall find the Queensland story to record fewer harvests, but to be far more eventful and certainly equally instructive. For a

elder colony the parliamentary Party could point to a satisfactory connexion with Reid and a triumphant alliance with Lyne. To place beside the many items of ameliorative legislation squeezed out of these two Ministers in return for support, the Queensland Party could produce only a good Factory and Shops Act and a few other concessions of a minor character. Nevertheless the Queenslanders had once been on the verge of office, and for a few days in 1899 actually attained it. So that the record of the one, as far as interest goes, compares equally with that of the other. Two other obvious contrasts may be mentioned between the Parties in the two colonies. In Queensland we shall note a gradual decline in the emphasis laid by Labourites on doctrinaire collectivism; in New South Wales, as we have already seen, there was a gradual increase in the attention paid to this ideal objective, mention of which found no place in the original platforms of the Party. In New South Wales we find the earliest steps of the Party complicated by the problem of the pledge; in Queensland this problem did not appear in a formidable shape until the period was almost at its close.

The Labour Party in Queensland passed through two phases of development during the period under discussion. During the first phase the doctrinaire element which surrounded it at birth and which accompanied its earlier growth disappeared, as the special limitations and opportunities of the parliamentary method became obvious; at the same time Labour was fixed in its resolve not to attempt office by means of an alliance with the relics of the old Liberal Party. During the second phase the Labour Party had so far departed from its original inspiration that it assumed the position of direct opposition to the Government, abandoning the idea of a social revolution, and adopting an ordinary Liberal programme of "betterment," such as could easily be matched by the non-Labour Parties elsewhere in Australasia. With the adoption of this attitude came the elaboration of a caucus organization, founded on a platform and a pledge, with

a split in its ranks, parallel to the split which occurred in New South Wales in 1894.

A few weeks before the *Royal Tar* set sail for Monte Video the Queensland Parliament met in Brisbane. The great idealist of the Labour movement was removed from the scene of his ardent and unselfish toil, and it remained to be seen how the movement which he had begun would steer its course, now that William Lane was gone. In the chair of the *Worker* he was succeeded by Ernest Blackwell, a man of great literary ability. He, after a short tenure of office, gave way to W. G. Higgs, whose articles, however inferior they may have been to Blackwell's in literary distinction and to Lane's in visionary idealism, did not yield place to either in vigorous denunciation of existing conditions. The following extract from one of Higgs' leaders suggests the tone of the *Worker* articles during this period :

The gang now in office cares nothing for principles or pledges ; its only care is to defend its ill-gotten booty from the perils of forced restitution, and at all hazards to protect the banks, syndicates, and speculators who are pouching the revenues of the Province. The mass of festering corruption behind the doors of the Government Departments is vaguely hinted at in the Reports of the Auditor-General, and did his officers dare to write all they know of the manner in which public funds have been and are converted to private uses, even the lethargic public of Queensland would besom out the brigands in disgust. Political morality, gradually deteriorating from the date of the Griffilwraith coalition, has now disappeared altogether from the Government party. There is absolutely no job too huge or too shameful for the present occupants of the Treasury benches to attempt. Such cynical abandonment to the beatitudes of boodle has never before been witnessed in Australia.

Such was the style, such the vigour with which Higgs assailed the ruling class, and such for the most part were the fulminations which took the place of Lane's quotations from *Looking Backward* and his eager descriptions of the Saturnian realms that might be expected to be the result of the

communal ownership. The motto "Socialism in our Time" which enshrined Lane's faith was replaced by this explanatory paragraph :

WANTED—TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR SOCIALISM
IN OUR TIME :

One Adult, one Vote ;
Land Tax, Income Tax ;
State Bank ;
Shops and Factories Act ;
Eight-Hours Day where practicable ;
Referendum and Initiative ;
Taxation of every person according to his ability to pay ;
State to find work for unemployed ;
State to fix minimum wage ;
Free Railways ;
Free Administration of Justice.

Thus the doctrinaire attitude of the principal Labour organ was replaced, soon after the departure of Lane, by a policy which thought acute criticism of the *status quo* more serviceable than eloquent predictions of blessings to be, and substituted a programme of measures the passing of which by Parliament was the necessary prerequisite of the inauguration of the millennium. But the *Worker* was not now the sole organ of the Queensland movement, though its endowment and its close connexion with the Australian Labour Federation gave it a sure pre-eminence. It was not universally considered to be the cleverest of the Labour newspapers. It had an energetic rival in the *Standard*, circulating in Ipswich and West Moreton, of which Glassey was chairman of directors. Another Labour leader, Hoolan, was associated with the *Mundic Miner* ; and in the north, about Charters Towers, the *Eagle* enjoyed a great reputation. In each district, in fact, local organs of opinion sprang up and as time wore on made it more difficult to centralize opinion, as had been possible in the days when the *Worker* stood alone. This fact must be assigned its due weight in accounting for the breakdown of doctrinaire enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the men returned in the Labour interest at the elections of 1893 were nearly

l of them professed Socialists. Glassey, the recognized leader of the Party, was not in Queensland when Parliament met in May 1893. He returned shortly afterwards from a visit to the United States, having gained new faith in the Socialistic ideal from Bellamy and his circle, with whom he had been permitted to associate on terms of some intimacy. It is interesting to observe, in view of later developments and changes of opinion, that the attitude adopted by the Party in New South Wales at this time of "support in return for concessions" found its chief exponent in Mat Reid, member for Toowong and secretary of the Party. As for the Party generally it is not without bearing on their professions to note that its parliamentary representatives were all teetotallers, that two of them were farmers, one a publican, one a journalist, one a book-eller, and the remainder artisans. Only three were native-born; one was an American, the rest were from the United Kingdom.

The entrance of Labour upon the parliamentary scene was a little obscured by the great public events with which it synchronized. The financial institutions of the colony, indeed of Australia as a whole, were in a desperate strait; ruin stared men in the face and the redress of public credit was the main preoccupation of the hour. The Legislature was regarded only in one aspect, as the last resort of the colony for the re-establishment of its finances. There was therefore little inclination to moralize upon the probable effect of the new element which had entered with such tremendous emphasis into the political life of the colony; nor was there likely to be any tolerance of views which might further prejudice the credit of the community. Socialism, for the time, must retire into the background. This the Labour element, as much as any other party, fully recognized, and the first important speech of Hoolan, its temporary leader, was redolent of compromise, proffered assistance and co-operation in the presence of so great a public danger.

The aspect of the House, so far as its salient charac-

teristics were concerned, was described by a leader-writer in the *Brisbane Courier*: "The Ministerial benches were . . . crowded . . . the Opposition benches looked woebegone. . . . A stranger would have supposed that the leading members of the Opposition had either been rejected by the constituencies, or gone over to the Government side, which is not far from the truth. For, despite the non-inclusion of decided Party men like Groom and Powers, the Ministerial majority is composed of all the moderate members of both the old Parties. The Labour Party have therefore accomplished what seemed a year or two ago impossible: they have caused the complete fusion of the historical factions of our Legislature, and have convinced the most sceptical of the fact that there remains no real political dividing line between the two, since sad experience has proved the folly of riotous extravagance and sentimental legislation." This quotation indicates the peculiar political position stripling Labour had to cope with in Queensland. The Party numbered 16 in a House of 72; the Ministerialists mustered 40, the old Opposition 8, and the Independents 8, but of the last mentioned several were members for the Central Division, whose sympathy was with the Government on all questions save that of separation.

In the speech to which reference has been made Hoolan promised that there should be no factious opposition offered to the policy of the Government, which, as foreshadowed in the Address, seemed to be very mild and conciliatory. Labour intended to move on with the assistance of any Government in power; it would not tolerate black labour or land-grant railways; it was regrettable that more attention had not been paid in the Address to the needs of the mining industry.

Just prior to the General Election, Sir Samuel Griffith, the Premier of the Coalition Ministry, resigned his position to become Chief Justice. He was succeeded in the Premiership by McIlwraith, who held office for about seven months. McIlwraith made no disguise of his indifference to the

opinion of Labour, and when the Sugar Works Guarantee Bill, a measure designed to afford considerable advantages to the cane-growers of the colony, was introduced, he refused to agree to the exclusion of coloured labour from employment in the mills. The Labour Party, fresh from its triumphs at the elections, made a determined effort to obtain this exclusion, but the measure became law without any concession being made. The attitude of the Government towards the Labour Party in the Queensland Assembly was based primarily on the assumption that the progress and prosperity of the colony had proceeded from and was identified with the interests of the classes to whom the Government looked for support—the pastoralists, the planters, and the mercantile community. Anything that was considered likely to affect these classes adversely must be resisted as injurious to the interests of the colony at large, including the working population. The Continuous Government, as it was called, had passed many Liberal measures through Parliament and was willing to pass others; but it steadfastly refused to pass or even consider the special legislation demanded by the Labour Party, although, as that Party pointed out, it was very willing to pass special legislation in the interests of its friends. McIlwraith and his supporters did not look upon the intrusion of the Labour Party into the political life of the country as likely to be permanent, or on the opinions of those who stood behind it in the constituencies as more than ill-informed impressions, as shallow as they were transient. But the teaching of Lane was more deeply rooted than was imagined, albeit the commentaries of his pupils did not show a proper apprehension of the doctrines of the master.

In Parliament the Labour members were naturally not the equals of the Government; they lacked experience. As in New South Wales, the Labour Party was diligent in its attendance at the sittings of Parliament, but, generally speaking, the quality of Labour oratory did not approach its quantity. It was long before the members learnt to be

relevant; longer still before they learnt an adequate respect for parliamentary forms. But in the meantime they could not be censured on the count of enthusiasm. They poured a ceaseless rain of criticism on Bills and administration alike; amendments were introduced at every possible opportunity for the purpose of emphasizing their principles, which were further advertised by means of abstract resolutions. Private members' day was fully occupied with the discussion of their own Bills, most of which, of course, had not, as the House was then tempered, the remotest chance of passing. Of these activities many examples suggest themselves. In June, on the Queensland National Bank Agreement Bill, a Labour amendment was moved for a previous audit and valuation of the assets of the bank. In July a resolution was moved affirming "the desirability of a conference between the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company and their men," and that "effect should be given to paragraph 4 of the Governor's speech" (which had invited the Houses to "devise some means to put Capital and Labour on a more satisfactory footing"), by the introduction of a "Conciliation or Compulsory Arbitration Bill." On the Crown Lands Bill of September 1893, objection was taken to the principles of freehold tenure, and so on. In one instance the ordinary course of Labour opposition nearly resulted in the resignation of the Ministry, and for some hours the colony was wondering whether 1893 would not witness a Labour Ministry in office. The Government's support was shaky on the Railway Border Tax Bill, which was intended to force growers of wool in Southern Queensland to send their wool along Queensland lines and not by New South Wales lines, which gave readier access to the seaboard. In the division on the second reading, the voting was equal for and against the Bill, but the Ministry was saved by the vote of the Speaker. It was a snap division, but delay would scarcely have improved matters, as the majority of absent members were pledged against the Bill. McIlwraith at once declared he would not hold office by

one vote, and that the Speaker's, and placed his resignation in the Governor's hands. The resignation was not accepted and, on a review of the position and a heart-to-heart talk with some of his followers, McIlwraith remained in office. Had the Ministry resigned, Hoolan and not Powers (the leader of the old Opposition) would have been asked by the Governor to form a new Ministry; the number of his followers would have made this necessary, as the remnant of the regular Opposition consisted of only six members.

The Labour Party was not in a position to form a Government; for that matter it was disinclined to take up the duties of the direct Opposition, and in the absence of Glassey Hoolan came to an agreement with the Opposition remnant, by which co-operation between Labour and the direct Opposition was to be carried as far as possible, and further, Powers was to assume the position of leader of the Opposition with the responsibilities attached thereto. Under this arrangement the two wings of the Opposition worked together with a fair degree of success until the end of the session, a common ground of agitation being then discovered in electoral reform, and a little later in the demand for a Conciliation Bill. This co-operation was also extended to the constituencies, as was shown at the by-elections of Ipswich and Townsville, where the bulk of the so-called Liberal vote was cast in favour of the Labour candidates.

In April 1894 Glassey returned from his travels and was accorded a triumphant welcome home. Henceforth the quality of his leadership becomes a determining factor in the history of his Party. A man of unimpeachable respectability and wide sympathies, he was not gifted with a high degree of intelligence, and never learnt the rudiments of parliamentary tactics. Almost the first result of his return was a formal notification to Powers by the Labour Party, at the opening of the '94 session, that the previously arranged coalition was now at an end. Powers, nevertheless, continued nominally to hold the position of leader of the Opposition and did his best to

make an extended co-operation between the Opposition parties possible and effective.

Early in 1894 Brisbane again began to seethe with academic discussion of theories of reform and, in particular, of the doctrine of collectivism. Interest had been sustained in this subject after Lane's departure by the telegrams that were arriving from South America hinting at the fate of the Australian Communists. The cables were soon followed up by long and, for the most part, dismal letters from the adventurers to the happier friends and relatives they had left behind. It seemed that collectivism on its trial was surely and somewhat speedily being found wanting. Correspondence on this and kindred subjects bulked large in the newspapers. Sermons were preached upon it. Meetings passed resolutions about it. A course of extension lectures on modern Socialism drew large audiences. All eyes were directed to Paraguay, to the co-operative settlements established by the Government, and to the Australian Labour Federation and the parliamentary Labour Party as apostles of the movement. But the more the Federation and its parliamentary representatives were associated by public opinion with harbouring designs for introducing "Socialism in our Time," the more vehemently did they repudiate the impeachment. We have seen how the *Worker* revised its motto and how the Labour members in Parliament were refining their tactics. The speeches of members and of candidates for Parliament may be searched in vain for utterances of a teleological character. The more offensive their attacks on the existing administration the rarer were their references to the blessings to be looked for under Socialism; the more dangerous their parliamentarism, the more nebulous became their idealism. The very meaning of the term "Socialism" in the mouths of its arch-exponents seemed to change and contract. The Labour members pointed to four Government measures, the Co-operative Settlement Act, the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act, and the

Treasury Note Issue Act, as Socialism, the suggested inference being that the Labour Party in power would hardly go one whit further in the same direction, and the puzzled electorate wondered whether this mild-eyed creature could be the grisly phantom predicted by the capitalist press. In these circumstances there came a demand from many quarters that Glassey should give a public interpretation of this sinister and puzzling phrase "Socialism in our Time," and he made no difficulty about responding. "The words 'Socialism in our Time,' " he said, "are merely a motto. There are certain acts, such as the Education Act; then there are the great public services, such as the Post and Telegraph, Harbours, etc., which, so far as they go, are Socialistic. We need more industries, such as the flour-milling industry, worked on Socialistic principles, like some sugar-mills even. 'Socialism in our Time' is the motto or cry for good laws which will benefit the whole of the community."

This definition of Socialism might well have excited the derision of readers of Edward Bellamy and followers of William Lane, but the conduct of Labour members in Parliament bore out Glassey's statement. There was no suggestion that society was to be revolutionized; inherited misery, inequalities of fortune and opportunity, all the ills of life, were apparently to be removed and the day of the millennium brought nearer by the abolition of plural voting, the institution of adult suffrage, the establishment of an arbitration system, an increase in the payment made to members, and measures like unto these.

Forasmuch as the Labour Party had ceased to represent itself as a Socialist body, it became, for the safety and welfare of the populace, incumbent upon its opponents to present it to the world in a true light and, as the General Election drew near, the papers representing the interests of capital appear to have been seriously alarmed lest the mildness of the Labour Party's apparent objective might win it support. An endeavour was therefore made to identify

the Party with the views of Lane and his comrades. An amazing leader in the *Brisbane Courier* exhibits at once the astounding self-satisfaction of the possessing class in Queensland and its distress at the gradual rationalization of the Labour cause. The Labour representatives were patently being converted into Liberals, and it became the duty of the *Courier* to show that Queensland had already enjoyed all the Liberalism it could possibly want. "Never perhaps has there been a Parliament or a policy offering narrower foothold to Opposition than that now before the public; . . . the first serious difficulty of the Labour Party is that so little is left to complain of." And then, "Why, since the matters of criticism open to an ordinary Opposition are so limited and pithless, do they not strike out to the distinctive platform from which they erstwhile thundered? . . . Why not take again to the preaching of Socialism and the crime of poverty, and the nationalization of all land, all wealth, and all means of production?" But this was not the path which the Labour Party was disposed to tread, and it was not to be driven along it in order to please its opponents. Not all the lessons of parliamentary life had been taken to heart, as we shall see, but the Party had learnt something and when its programme for the election of 1896 was issued it comprised the following articles :

Electoral Reform.—One man, one vote. Special provision to be made for all whose occupations necessitate a constant change of residence; six months' residence in the colony to be the qualification for the franchise; all parliamentary elections on the same day, that day to be a public holiday, and all public-houses to be closed; abolition of the Nominee Chamber.

National Work.—State control of water conservation and irrigation; State-aided village settlement; State bank.

Education.—Secular.—Elementary—compulsory; higher—optional; both absolutely free in State schools.

Regulation of Industry.—Statutory eight-hours day where practicable; Shops and Factories Act with elected inspectors; Mines Act giving complete protection to

miners ; Machinery Act, providing for inspection of land boilers and machinery ; persons in charge to have certificates of competency.

Labour Rights.—State Department of Labour, to which men can apply for work at a minimum wage, as a right ; Wages Act, giving complete lien for wages over work performed and full security for wages against all forfeiture whether by agreement or court order ; a progressive tax upon land values irrespective of improvements ; realization of an adequate return from the unalienated public estate.

Repeals.—Abolition of State-aided immigration ; abolition of all conspiracy laws relating to industrial disputes.

Law Reform.—All magistrates to be elected.

Referendum.—The submitting of measures for approval or rejection by the people.

Miscellaneous.—Revision of railway tariff ; the legal cancelling of a member's right to represent a constituency on a two-thirds majority adverse vote of his constituents ; exclusion of coloured, Asiatic, and contract or indented labour ; State construction and ownership of all railways ; and any measure that will secure a fair and equitable return to Labour and promote the progress of the colony.

As regards local questions, including that of separation in Central and Northern Queensland, local organizations are free to determine their own course of action.

On no account shall the fiscal question be regarded as a Labour Party question.

Recommended.—To secure sober men as Labour candidates for Parliament.

The Labour Party, collectively and individually, was not slow in acquiring a knowledge of what was and what was not practicable in Parliament and acceptable to the electorate ; but this knowledge availed little against the power of the Government. The Party had hoped to play a part similar to that of the New South Wales Labour men, but little or nothing was to be obtained by conciliating the Ministerialists, while the direct Opposition was too feeble to allow of an effective combination being made so as to secure concessions by force. The Party was in fact handicapped less by its own weakness than by the weakness of its allies, the traditional Opposition. Nevertheless it is

impossible to avoid the conclusion that, had the alliance between Labour and the Opposition remnant which was entered into in 1893 been sustained, had the joint Parties appealed to the mass of Liberal opinion in the country, and, most important of all, had they come to an agreement as to the seats which each Party would contest without opposition from the other, their likelihood of ousting the Government 'would have materially improved and perchance have been successful. But the parliamentary Labour Party, even if it had been willing, could not make an election alliance with any other Party; the choice of candidates rested with the local Leagues, and no promise by the parliamentary Party of freedom from opposition was likely to be honoured unless it was endorsed by the Leagues. In Parliament the keynote of Labour tactics was not policy at all but violence, and no consideration for the feelings or interests of Labour's temporary allies was sufficient to restrain it. The most pertinent example of this spirit is of course the action of the Labour members during the debates on the Coercion Act, and, although on this occasion they received the support of the Opposition, the incident makes it clear that they were not the kind of men with whom the veteran parliamentarians who formed the little group behind Powers and Groom could remain for long allied.

The incidents of the shearers' strike, which were responsible for the introduction of the Coercion Act, will be found elsewhere. The Act itself was introduced into the Assembly on 5th September 1894. Singularly enough, it had been prefaced by a resolution passed in the previous July and moved by Andrew Fisher, to the effect that "the time had arrived when Parliament should take steps to prevent the constant recurrence of industrial disputes." Fisher, whose motion was cordially endorsed by his Labour colleagues, was doubtless thinking of a scheme of compulsory conference and conciliation, but a very different interpretation was given to the resolution by Ministers. He asked for bread and received a stone. The measure was introduced

to put an end to the troubles in the districts affected by the shearing strike, and was without parallel in Australia since the days of the Eureka stockade. The Bill stipulated that its provisions might be applied to any district by proclamation, and the magistrates in such district would have authority to carry out the regulations framed to make the Act effective. After a district had been proclaimed, it would be unlawful to carry arms or ammunition therein, and any place or building might be entered for the purpose of search, force being used when necessary; the sale of arms was also forbidden. Suspected persons might be arrested and detained without bail or mainprize, the courts being forbidden to try or discharge them without the direction of the Governor acting on the advice of his Ministers. A list of suspects detained in prison, with a statement concerning each, was to be laid before Parliament within seven days of the beginning of each month, and if the arrested man should chance to be a member of Parliament the fact of his arrest was to be made known to that body immediately. A man might be arrested on a provisional warrant, in which case he was not to be detained without trial for more than thirty days; if, however, the arrest was under a special warrant, the detention might extend to six months. This latter provision was amended somewhat before the Bill was passed and the time of detention under a special warrant reduced from six months to two.

This Draconian law, entitled "An Act for the Better Preservation of the Peace in Disturbed Districts," naturally met with opposition both from Liberals and Labour men. The proper and efficient administration of the law as it stood was, they claimed, sufficient to meet all emergencies. But in the case of the Labour members opposition became tempestuous and ultimately hysterical. On the evening of 6th September Nelson moved the second reading, which was carried at 6.20 A.M. by a majority of 12. On the following Tuesday the House went into committee on the Bill, and a scene took place almost unrivalled even in the

records of deliberative Assemblies in Australia. Glassey and six of his colleagues were named and suspended for a week after a painful and humiliating scene, during which the Chair was set at complete defiance. The following day, an eighth Labour member was named and suspended, and, after a vigorous protest on the part of Powers against the action of the Chair, the remaining Labour members and the main part of the Opposition walked out of the Chamber. Following this exodus, the rest of the committee stage was hurried through, and the Bill read a third time.

Much may be urged in excuse, and something in favour, of the tactics of the Opposition Parties. The terms of the Bill were without precedent and the conduct of the Chairman was lacking in tact. For the rest, a scene such as was enacted in the Queensland Assembly on this occasion was not without its political use, and the Labour Party was thinking not of the Assembly but of the Labour Leagues, upon whom it was desired to impress the fact that the representatives of Labour were willing to suffer public odium and personal inconvenience in the defence of their principles. But the reverse side of these intractable tactics will be sufficiently illustrated by the consideration that the clause of the Bill to which most objection was taken, namely, that dealing with the power to arrest and detain on general and special warrants, was carried by a vote of 31 to 10. The number of Labour members not voting was 17, and of the regular Opposition 7, so it would appear that, if the ordinary parliamentary method had been adhered to, the clause would have been defeated by 3 votes.

Though in the case just detailed the Labour Party and the Opposition were found going to extremes in company, the uncompromising spirit displayed was habitual in the Labour Party and goes far to account for the failure of the two sections of the Opposition to come to any permanent settlement for co-operation.

After the agreement arrived at between Hoolan and

Powers during the 1893 session had been terminated by Glassey, Powers, as already stated, continued nominally to exercise the office of leader of the Opposition ; but towards the end of August 1894 he announced that the position he had occupied for some little time had been anomalous and inconvenient. While on the one hand the Premier had conferred with the Labour wing independently of the regular Opposition, the Labour Party had not troubled to consult Powers in regard to important business introduced by its members into the Assembly. "It was," said Powers, "evidently Mr. Glassey's aim to separate his Party from the Opposition on every possible occasion"; he therefore declined to continue as nominal leader, and for the remainder of that session the Opposition blundered along in two sections.

In May 1895 Powers made, in his policy speech at Maryborough, a powerful bid for co-operation. He enunciated a lengthy betterment programme, on the lines subsequently followed in New South Wales by Reid and Lyne, and pleaded for the support of all elements of Liberal and Democratic thought in the colony. "In the Progressive Party we desire especially to enlist the support and co-operation of all men and women who are not included in any other organization, either because they are debarred by the Rules or because they cannot accept the whole of the policy of any other Party. It is only by joint action with all Democrats and Radicals in or out of associations or parties, whether they call themselves Labour, Opposition, or Democrats, that we can hope once more to clear the air of the political chloroform that appears to have sent to sleep Liberal principles. . . . The Labour Party desires to go further than I have indicated, and at once. But I think that the majority, if not all of them, will be prepared to fight at the next election for something practicable now and agree to a modified programme for the ensuing Parliament. The Labour Party need not sink one principle that they have been advocating to adopt this or a similar programme." Powers tried to do what

Lilley had failed to do. He thought to take up the cloak that had slipped some seven years before from the shoulders of Griffith and had since lain unheeded on the ground. But the Australian Labour Federation was against such or any alliance. "The whole of Mr. Powers' utterance," remarked the chief Labour organ, "furnishes a very encouraging lesson to the Labour Party, and shows that by keeping united and remaining separate from all other parties, the orthodox politician will be compelled to do some good, if only for the sake of securing office." This attitude was confirmed a few weeks later by Mat Reid at Toowong. "There is a necessity for an advanced party in politics apart from what is known as the Opposition and from the Government. It would be to the great advantage of the country if what is known as the Opposition was returned to the House strong enough to oust the present Government and establish in its place a democratic Government. I do not know but that the Labour Party would help them." Such was the reply of Labour to the Liberal Opposition, but what was not appreciated was the fact that the dominant position of Labour in New South Wales was due to the existence of a strong Opposition, while the electoral tactics of Labour in Queensland made it impossible that there should be an Opposition except in name.

When Parliament met in June 1895 the anomalous position of the Opposition sections with no official leader was obvious. The Premier refused to consider Glassey as the leader, unless he was willing to undertake the responsibilities attaching to the position, which he was not, and at length an agreement was come to by which Powers once more assumed his old position. The tactlessness of Glassey, however, soon rendered this arrangement intolerable for Powers. He actually introduced a rival Electoral Amendment Bill, and when, the Sugar Works Guarantee Act being under discussion, the Opposition leader moved that the machinery for all guaranteed sugar works should be manufactured in the colony, Glassey amended it so as to introduce the collectivist principle,

and proposed that all such machinery should be made in State workshops. In spite of the friction between the two leaders, the session was not without result. Powers, a few months later, declared that the Labour Party had given him friendly and loyal support. "We were," he said, "powerful enough combined to prevent the passing of every railway proposal that we opposed . . . also the proposal to give the squatters ten years' extension of leases in settled districts; the proposal to grant extension of leases on the northern and central railways on the rabbit plea, and the proposal to extend the term of Parliament to five years. . . . I know that the only reason that the Ministry were not ousted from office last session was because the Labour Party was under the leadership of Mr. Glassey and because nothing short of the whole Labour programme at once will satisfy him."

Nevertheless, as the 1896 elections drew near, Powers again endeavoured to induce the Labour Party to ally itself with the ordinary Opposition, by arranging a programme of legislation which was desired by both sections, and by arranging a settlement in regard to the seats which each party would contest. On 17th January 1896 he wrote to Glassey: "If Labour will contest half the seats and leave half to the Opposition, I am sure we can come back with a majority, and do good work by carrying out many of the planks both parties agree to. . . . We keep this side of communism, and if you do not wish to go in for communism in the next Parliament, the Opposition candidates who will support three-fourths of the Labour programme ought to be supported by the friends of Labour." The Labour Party declined to make any compromise of the kind, as apart from any other consideration an alliance with the Opposition would undoubtedly have weakened its position with its own supporters.

A series of meetings between the Opposition and the Labour Executive took place, and Powers' suggestion in regard to a division of constituencies was so modified as to leave two-thirds of the 72 seats to Labour. F

proposal which would give Labour the first choice of 36 seats did not meet with the favour of the Australian Labour Federation, which was anxious to attempt at least 47, possibly as many as 55 seats. A further difficulty arose from the desire of the Opposition to have a free field in the Central districts, which were its chief stronghold, a proposal which did not at all satisfy the Labour members sitting for electorates in that part of the colony. Finally the Labour Executive, in reply to Powers' letter to Glassey, professed itself unable to influence the action of the local organizations. Thereupon Powers, hopeless of the future, announced his retirement from politics.

The Labour Party appointed a Central political executive to conduct the election, and the *Worker* wrote of the "steadfast adherence" of the Party to Socialism. As in the previous election this attitude was what the Government desired to see adopted; the more extreme the Socialism, the better were the chances of a victory for the Party in power. During its negotiations with Powers the Labour Party seemed confidently to expect to be able to sweep aside the Opposition and return from the elections with a largely increased following, hence the cavalier manner adopted towards the Opposition leader; but as the election drew near it recognized that its position was not so secure as it had thought. It therefore began to hedge a little. Socialism could not, of course, be repudiated, but the Party refrained from advocating it, preferring to point to its parliamentary record and the misdeeds of the Government. The *Worker* could not adopt this course, but it did what it could for the Party. About the middle of February 1896 it declared that "a mistake is made in thinking that because the *Worker* is the official organ of the associated workers of Queensland the parliamentary Labour Party's platform is the platform of the *Worker*. The *Worker* will probably always be in advance of the parliamentary Labour Party. We hope so, anyway. The *Worker* is a teacher, a propagandist. Were the parliamentary Labour Party to take up the whole

Worker programme only a few of their members would be elected to Parliament, for the voters are not yet ready for it." Such withdrawals deceived nobody, not even those who made them, and had little effect on the elections, which resulted in the Ministerialists obtaining 44 seats and Labour 20, while 8 went to the old Opposition.

When Parliament assembled in June 1896 the Opposition remnant was seen to have retired to the rearmost of the Opposition cross benches, the front Opposition bench being occupied by Glassey, Hoolan, and Cross. The appearance of Labour as the official opposition was thus foreshadowed in the geography of the new House, but not for some time did Glassey undertake the responsibilities of leader of the Opposition. The inconvenience of this was obvious, but a section of the parliamentary Party, voiced by Mat Reid, refused to consider any change from the Party arrangements of the previous Parliament. According to this section Labour must hold itself apart alike from the Government and the official Opposition, and await the time when, holding the balance of power, it could securely use either or both the regular Parties to further its ends. To this opinion Mat Reid and his friends clung tenaciously, declaring that a working association with either of the other Parties would make Labour responsible and respectable. "The great danger of all reform parties," Mat Reid proclaimed, "was to become more and more respectable, and ordinarily liberal." It was but an extension of this opinion that is seen in his further declaration that "it would be a long time before Labour took office; it was not ready for office even were it to get a majority." This was received with murmurs of dissent, and Glassey immediately retorted, "I join issue with that dictum. I am ready."

This question was still undetermined in June 1898, when a Labour-in-Politics Convention was held in Brisbane. This body comprised representatives of the parliamentary Labour Party and of the executive of the Australian Labour Federation as well as delegates from each

electorate ; Glassey was in the chair, and Hinchcliffe and Browne were secretaries. The Convention sat with closed doors, and after a week's discussion propounded a manifesto which comprised a revised platform, a statement of Labour claims, and a pledge to be taken by Labour candidates. The document was a long one and, like the one it replaced, bore witness that many hands had been at work on its composition.

Electoral Reform.—One adult, one vote ; State enrolment of voters with provision to be made for all those whose occupations necessitate a constant change of residence ; all parliamentary elections on the same day, that day to be a public holiday.

Constitutional Reform.—Abolition of the Nominee Chamber ; Referendum ; submitting of measures for approval or rejection by the people.

Industrial Reform.—State Department of Labour presided over by a responsible Minister ; conciliation and arbitration (compulsory) ; amended Shops and Factories Act, applicable to shearing sheds, shearers' huts, etc. ; statutory eight-hours day, where practicable ; amended Mines Regulation Act ; Machinery Act, providing for the inspection of land boilers, etc. ; minimum wage on all Government contracts ; amended Employers' Liability Act ; Early Closing Act with weekly half-holiday ; Wages Protection Act ; Government work to be performed by day labour when practicable ; State settlements at which persons out of employment can obtain work as a right ; public organization of unemployed labour, for public purposes at a minimum wage.

Taxation Reform.—Readjustment of taxation with a view to lessening the burden on those least able to bear it ; progressive land tax with exemption up to £300 ; progressive income tax with exemption up to £200 ; absentee tax.

Land Reform.—Measures for facilitating settlement and prevention of the aggregation of large estates ; protection of homesteads from seizure for debt ; realization of an adequate return from the public estate ; Mining on Private Property Act.

National Work.—State control of water conservation (artesian or otherwise) and irrigation ; national markets and storehouses ; State bank ; loans to settlers ; State

ownership and construction of railways; State sugar refinery; quartz-crushing mills; flour mills; slaughter and chilling works; State manufacture of all railway rolling stock; State fire and life insurance; State coastal marine mail service with provision for carriage of passengers and goods.

Education (Secular).—Elementary, compulsory; higher, optional; both absolutely free in State schools.

Miscellaneous.—State audits of banking and insurance companies; civil service reform; law reform; Justices of the Peace to be elected; old age pensions; abolition of State-aided immigration; repeal of conspiracy laws relating to industrial disputes; repeal of Polynesian Labour Act, and exclusion of coloured, Asiatic, and contract or indentured labour; revision of railway tariff; and any measure that will secure a fair and equitable return to Labour and promote the progress of the colony.

Local Questions.—As regards local questions not conflicting with this platform, including that of separation in Central and Northern Queensland, local organizations are free to determine their own course of action.

Fiscal Question.—On no account shall the fiscal question be regarded as a Labour Party question.

Conditions of Candidature.—All persons nominated for selection as Labour candidates must, prior to the taking of a ballot or recognition as a Labour candidate, sign the following pledge:

“I agree to advocate and support the principles contained in this platform.”

Labour Party political organizations shall, prior to the taking of a ballot, get a pledge from candidates to the following effect:

“I, the undersigned candidate for selection by the ... branch of the Labour Party’s recognized political organization, hereby give my pledge that, if not selected, I will not in any way oppose the candidature of the duly selected nominee.”

When the local Labour organizations wish endorsement of their selected candidates, they shall send the pledge, signed by their candidates, to the Central Political Executive with a request for its endorsement.

The programme put forward in 1898 closely resembled that of 1896; it differed from its predecessor in one important point only. The platform of 1896, January 1, 1896, was

Department of Labour should be set up to which men could apply for work at a minimum wage as a right; the later platform still demanded a Department of Labour, but no longer insisted on the "right to work," except within a State settlement, which it demanded should be set up and to which the unemployed were to have right of access. The programme of 1896 was one of legislation; that of 1898 went still further in the same direction and was to the last degree different from the schedule of ideas that had originally formed the aspirations rather than the programme of the Party under Lane's influence. Mat Reid had not attended the Convention, but his views were represented thereat; the 1898 platform was in a sense a victory for the Glassey standpoint and seemed to presume an early assumption of office by the Labour Party.

During the sittings of the Convention, the Progressive League, the extra-parliamentary organization of the Opposition, approached the Labour delegates as to the formation of a joint Opposition Party. The Convention referred the League to the parliamentary Labour Party and a joint committee of six was appointed to see what could be done. On this committee the Labour representatives were Glassey, Dawson, and Kidston, while Groom, Drake, and Boles acted for the Progressive League. There were two difficulties to be overcome before progress towards an agreement could be made; Labour would not tolerate any departure from the newly adopted programme and an acceptable leader had to be found. As regards the leadership, it was soon discovered that Glassey would not serve under Drake, nor Drake under Glassey. A Labour proposal that each Party should retain its own leader and that the two should consult as to joint action was considered but found little favour; in the end the committee was forced to declare the *entente* abortive. It was now impossible for Labour to avoid the responsibilities of its own success, and towards the end of August 1898 it was announced in the House that Labour had accepted

the position of constitutional Opposition ; and a little later Drake announced his election to the leadership of the independent Opposition. But though the project of a fusion between Labour and the remainder of the Opposition could not be proceeded with, the two Parties continued on friendly terms. An influential group of the Labour Party, in which Dawson and Kidston were included, still looked forward to an alliance of all sections of the Opposition, and it was owing to the influence of this group that in January 1899 an announcement was made that, at the coming General Election, the Labour element and the independent Opposition would each refrain from putting forward candidates for seats already in the possession of the other Party.

Parliament was dissolved on 15th February 1899, and at the General Election Federation overshadowed all other questions. Dickson, the Premier, was strongly Federalist ; so, too, were the majority of the Labour Party ; the question of Federation was therefore not made the subject of party controversy. During the election campaign it became evident that the Labour Party was seriously divided, the cause of the division being the unsettled question of Solidarity. Prior to 1898 a member of the Queensland Labour Party was only required, in addition to subscribing to the ordinary platform of the Party, to pledge himself, should he again become a candidate for Parliament, to abide by the choice of the branch to which he belonged, and assist the candidature of the person selected should he himself not have been successful. This left to members a wide range of freedom in Parliament, and during the first years of Labour's appearance there were frequent divisions of the Labour vote, divisions which did not much matter since the fate of a Ministry, as the phrase went in New South Wales, was hardly ever in question. When, for instance, Nelson announced the Coercion Act, only eleven voted with Glassey against its introduction ; three members abstained from voting, while, *mirabile dictu*, three—Fisher, Williamson, and Ouden—voted with the

Ministry. The Solidarity idea, however, had already many advocates, and was supported by the *Worker*. The Australian Workers' Union was strongly against it, and at its annual conference at Charleville in February 1895 a resolution was passed declaring that "candidates for Parliament, after signing the Labour platform, should not be asked to sign the Solidarity pledge, as foreshadowed in the *Worker* . . . as it tends to split and weaken our forces." It was not, however, until 1896 that any question of importance arose on which the parliamentary group were seen to be gravely divided. The Party voted unanimously against the second reading of the Federation Enabling Bill, but when it came back amended from the Council, Labour was divided in its attitude, Hoolan supporting the Council, presumably in the hope that the amendments would wreck the Bill, and Dawson following the Premier, apparently fearful of establishing a precedent warranting the interference of the Council on such a grave matter. As it happened, the split was no great concern. A more serious division disclosed itself a little later in regard to the affairs of the Queensland National Bank. A minority of the Party, including Glassey and Hoolan, supported the Relief Bill, while the *Worker* expressed the ordinary trade union standpoint and the majority view, dubbing them "a minority of wobblers." Discussing this difference of opinion, one of Glassey's supporters went to the root of the question in his *apologia* at Ipswich early in 1897. Upon the question of bank relief legislation, he affirmed that "each member of the Labour Party is entitled to call himself a man and not a mouse. There are questions outside of the Labour platform on which every member claims to be allowed to exercise his independent judgment. And in regard to the Queensland Bank question, it was determined at a meeting of the Labour representatives that each member should be entitled to vote as he thought best on that matter. Had that not been allowed, I am sure that 60 per cent of the members would have retired from the Party and consulted their constituents. . . .

Whenever I have the right to exercise my own judgment, without doing an injustice to my Party, I will do it without asking the permission of any man, party, or paper in Queensland. I am answerable to my Party on any matters affecting the platform of the Party; but in regard to other affairs, my constituency is my only tribunal." The somewhat submissive reply of the *Worker* to this declaration of intention and faith merits quotation. "Any little friction that may be caused by the combat of opinions will have ample time to die out before the 1899 elections, when we perhaps shall have a more united Party than we had at the beginning of this year. . . . We do not wish to appear boastful or conceited, but in self-defence we are compelled to say that there would long ago have been a split in the ranks of the parliamentary Labour men had it not been for this journal. . . . Speaking candidly, we must confess to a belief that the people of Queensland will not for some time yet return a majority of Labour members." In view of this, what should the policy of a minority be? "Should a Labour member accept a portfolio in any other than a Labour Ministry? . . . Since the 1896 elections two or three members of the Labour Party have evinced a strong desire to get on to the Treasury benches, no matter how." The reference is probably to Glassey, Hoolan, and their group, and the *Worker* goes on to state that it can see no objection to a man "of strong character" accepting a portfolio in a non-Labour Ministry, providing his colleagues are men "of somewhat different stamp and record to that of Boodlewraith. . . . But we put it to any man, who is after a seat in the Cabinet, whether it would not be to the advantage of the Labour movement at large if he flung away ambition and used the immense power he has, as a member of the Legislature, to teach the public the simple justice of the principles embodied in the Labour platform."

During the months that followed the opening of Parliament in 1897 it was evident that friction in parliamentary circles was increasing. Every member in every speech he

made was careful to protest the absence of any division ; but the *Worker* kept hinting at the desirableness of a change of leadership. Glassey, however, remained leader and strengthened his position during the following session by his determined action in regard to the Bank report.

During the recess in 1898 the difference between Reid and Glassey, already noticed, as to Labour's best plans for the future, developed quickly, and in May, Hoolan, speaking at Georgetown, defended his action in connexion with the Bank and " declared the passing of the Chillagoe Railway Bill to be the best thing that could have happened to North Queensland, denied that he had ever changed front or sold himself to boodlers, but he had changes of mind regarding the necessity for introducing capital, as on his recent tour with the Mines Commission he had noticed nearly every northern goldfield languishing." He severely criticized Dawson for recent statements as to the Bank and the Chillagoe Railway, praised the Land Act, and censured the *Worker*. There was evidently a widening gap between the two sections of the Party ; Glassey was with Hoolan, but on the other side were the *Worker* and the Australian Labour Federation with Dawson, Reid, and Hinchcliffe as the most prominent leaders.

In the following June (1898) the new platform and pledge were promulgated. Glassey had presided over the deliberations of the Labour-in-Politics Convention, and made no declaration which would lead the public to suppose that he disagreed with the pledge, which, as it happened, followed exactly the wording adopted in 1893 ; but the Convention required that when a person was elected as a Labour member he should agree to resign his seat if requested to do so by the Labour League of his constituency. To this stipulation several of the Party strongly objected, as hampering their proper freedom, and putting them at the mercy of the majority of the parliamentary caucus. A cave consisting of Cross, Jackson, Sim, and Hoolan denounced the platform as " the work of a Brisbane clique," and spoke openly of the Australian Labour Federa-

tion junto. "My procedure," declared Cross, "has secured for me the unappeasable animosity of a few self-elected dictators . . . this clique, ever sowing the seeds of dissension and discord, evidently require me to follow blindly their lead, whether I think them right or wrong." The few self-elected dictators, it should be noted, were the central executive appointed at the Labour-in-Politics Convention, on which the parliamentary Labour Party and the Australian Labour Federation were represented by the president and secretary of each body. The "procedure" consisted in the persistence of Cross in standing for the Clermont electorate, in spite of the fact that the local Workers' Political Organization was against him and had requested the committee of the central executive to endorse the candidature of Lesina, which the committee after inquiry did. The position of Glassey was fast becoming intolerable. Himself at loggerheads with the Solidarities, he was forced as chairman of the committee to approve Lesina and condemn Cross. The quarrel of the leaders spread to the constituencies and a bunch of Independent Labour candidates were run in opposition to official Labour candidates, that is to say, those proposed by the local Workers' Political Organization, and approved by the central executive. The seceders included Cross, Hoolan, and King, who failed to retain their seats ; in fact, all the Independent Labour candidates were unsuccessful.

The elections displayed how far the Labour Party had departed from the simple gospel of "Socialism in our Time." Hoolan spoke of Queensland as a young country badly in need of capital ; other Independents spoke in the same strain, and alleged that they could not put aside the urgent claims of their constituents at the behest of a caucus majority. As regards the Solidarity candidates, scarcely a word fell from them that would lead their hearers to suppose they had ever learnt the alphabet of Socialism. The elections resulted in the return of twenty-three Labour members, and the number was increased to twenty-five before the year closed. The Party came back, therefore.

stronger than before the elections and Solidarity was justified by success.

During the election, Glassey, by revoking his support of Lesina and deliberately assisting King against the *Worker's* candidate, had associated himself outright with the rebels, and it was very natural that the leadership of the Party should be taken from him; at the opening of the new Parliament he was deposed by eighteen votes to four, and Dawson was chosen in his stead.

When Parliament met in May 1899 the first important business taken up was the Federation Enabling Bill, and it soon became apparent that some of the Ministerialists did not support the Government with heartiness. This was seen when Kidston moved an amendment to the Bill on the point of electoral reform. The Government opposed the amendment, which was defeated by four votes, some Ministerialists voting against the Government and others refraining from voting; the Enabling Bill was passed, however, and the session closed. On 2nd September 1899 the Referendum was taken and resulted in a majority of 7492 votes in favour of Federation, Brisbane being the only considerable district with a majority against it. Parliament met again on 12th September, and on 4th October the Address to the Queen on the subject of Federation was moved by Dickson and seconded by Dawson in his capacity of leader of the Opposition. The question of Federation being thus disposed of, the real difficulties of the Government began. In November a Bill was brought in to create a standing committee to scrutinize and report upon all proposals for new railways. The Labour Party opposed this Bill and many of the Ministerialists showed a disposition to desert the Government. The second reading was carried only by a small majority. In committee on 22nd November, O'Connell, one of the Labour members, moved that public works other than railways should be included in the scope of the committee's work. The Ministry accepted the amendment, and the Labour Party, seeing an opportunity to defeat the Government,

voted against it with a number of malcontents from the Government benches. The Government was defeated, and its lack of control of the House was further shown by a division on the question "that the Chairman leave the Chair," upon which Dawson moved that the House should proceed with the next order of the day; this was lost, but the Government had a majority of one only. On the following day Dickson spoke on the situation which had arisen, and Parliament adjourned for a few days in order that the Government might consider its position. On 26th November the Government resigned and the Lieutenant-Governor sent for Dawson, requesting him to form a Ministry. The Labour Party numbered twenty-three and the "remnant" eight, so that the position of the Labour leader was very unsatisfactory. Even if he could count upon the loyalty of the remnant, he had not a majority, but must depend on the malcontents of the Ministerial party. Rumours were afloat of a coalition between the Labour Party and other sections. The newspapers opposed to the Labour Party spoke of its "childish eagerness to play with Cabinet toys." Certainly the issue was ludicrous, but Dawson had received what he deemed to be a clear guarantee that those who had voted the Dickson Ministry out of office would support him in his turn, and in the circumstances there seems no reason why he should not have made an attempt to form a Government. The petty intrigues connected with the formation and displacement of the Dawson Cabinet are obscure and hardly worth following; it will suffice to say that Dawson approached both Forrest, the principal of the Ministerial seceders, and Drake and Groom. Forrest laid down conditions which were impossible of acceptance, while the Opposition leaders at first consented to join the Cabinet and then withdrew. There was, as we have already seen, a strong party among the Labour members hostile to a coalition, and it is doubtful whether Dawson would have carried with him a united Party if he had admitted Forrest to his Cabinet. The refusal of the Independent Opposition to join the new

Government cleared the way for the formation of a purely Labour Ministry, and when Dawson met the Assembly on 1st December he announced the names of the first Labour Ministry that Australia had yet seen. The Assembly treated the new Government with contumely ; an adjournment of that body was refused to Dawson by 36 votes to 26, and there was no other course open to him than to resign. The Labour Government could hardly have expected any other treatment than what it received, but Dawson appears to have accepted the commission to form a Government in order to demonstrate as clearly as possible that the Labour Party was prepared to take the responsibilities of office, and doubtless hoped that his Government would be permitted to remain in power sufficiently long to bring forward a programme.

Philp formed a Government, of which Dickson was a member, and the Labour Party returned to its rôle of the principal Opposition, spending a great deal of its time in blocking private railway Bills which came before the House. The Government resorted to the closure, and whenever it did so the resentment of the Labour members created such a disturbance that several of them were suspended.

Glassey had been deprived of his leadership in May 1899, and before the year was out he emphasized his determination to retain his independence, and still further widened the breach between himself and the main body of the Labour Party by championing the Uitlanders, whose cause he vehemently espoused. In this course he was supported by James Wilkinson, a member of the central executive, who in June 1900 severed his connexion with the Party, claiming liberty "outside the matters mutually agreed upon," such as Federation and the South African War. Glassey now felt that even nominal adherence to the official Labour Party was impossible and inconsistent with his ideals, and on 3rd July 1900 he announced at Bundaberg that he had resigned his seat. "Members of the Party," he said, "who might believe in the Government measures

are compelled to vote against the Party or to sacrifice their individuality, principles, and manhood by voting for it. I do not differ from the principles of the Party, and am as loyal to them as ever." Hinchcliffe was hurriedly sent to contest Bundaberg with the old chief, and was beaten by a vote of nearly two to one.

"In 1900 Tom Glassey went wrong. . . . During the recess in June 1900 he secretly made all arrangements for securing re-election, and suddenly resigned. The Party had no time to organize against him, and though they ran a good man against him, the seat was lost to Labour, and Glassey was retained by the votes of the men he had fought for ten years, but who will take any traitor to their ranks so long as they can weaken the Labour cause." This is an extract from Spence's *Australia's Awakening* and embodies the official Labour view of Glassey's conduct. There is, however, another and more reasonable view of his behaviour. He was a disciple of Lane; with him Socialism was a faith and not an expedient, and he could not consent that his faith should be defined for him even by professed believers, or his liberty of prophesying be exercised at the will of others. It is true that Glassey had been in the chair at the Convention of 1898 which had drawn up the platform and promulgated the pledge, and although he was against the crowded programme and the adoption of any pledge other than that of adherence to the broad principles of a Labour platform such as had been adopted in 1893, he had made no protest. Glassey was mentally confused and aghast at the thought that he, the erstwhile lonely champion of the oppressed, the parliamentary arm of Lane, the friend and disciple of Bellamy, should become apostate; but in the end he saw that he stood where he had always stood on the platform of "Socialism in our Time," which his colleagues had abandoned for a platform of mere opportunism and betterment. He still vaunted his Socialism, while they were eager that the word should fall out of use. Glassey was no mere intransigent who refused to take a part while striving for the whole. and his

complaint against his fellow Labour members was that they were losing sight of the *ultima ratio* of Socialism in their struggle for small present benefits, the acquisition of which brought them no nearer their goal. Somewhat in this way he explained how it was that he, a Socialist and Labour reformer, refused to bind himself to vote on all questions, whatever might be his belief, according to the direction of the majority of the Party. Caucus rule was obviously the sequence of the platform and pledge of 1893.

It may be opportune now to inquire how it happened that the problem of the pledge did not disclose itself at an earlier stage in the development of the Queensland Labour Party as it did in New South Wales. In the first place, the fiscal question, which was the cause of disruption in New South Wales, did not intrude itself into the political life of the northern colony with anything like the intensity which characterized its appearance elsewhere, so that its relegation to the class of topics which were to be irrelevant to the Labour platform was easily arranged. In the second place, the movement in Queensland was far more a trades union movement engineered by the Australian Labour Federation than in New South Wales, where, in the early stages, a smart contest took place between the Trades and Labour Council and the Labour Electoral Leagues for control, a contest which ended in favour of the Leagues. And in the third place, the radical weakness of the parliamentary position so far as legislative effort was concerned gave to the activities of the parliamentary group a negative rather than a positive character; therefore the occasion which might have necessitated a split on the question of doctrine did not arise.

But the seeds of diversity were already deep hidden in the movement, and of these the two principal were the centralized character of the Australian Labour Federation organization and the fundamental problem of collectivism as opposed to mere amelioration. It is true, collectivism in its crude form had disappeared from Queensland before it received its death-blow in Paraguay. But the Lane

tradition left its mark on the Queensland movement, in that it created a school which regarded Liberalism in its form of amelioration with a certain suspicion, and thus divided the Labour camp into a moderate and an extreme Party, the one eager to gather up anything that might fall from the table of the Conservatives, the other chiefly jealous concerning the inviolability of the Labour faith and the loyalty of the parliamentary Labour group to the Labour tradition. It is in the opposition of these two, the Australian Labour Federation rule and the Lane tradition, that the key to the inner history of the Party in the latter part of this period is to be found.

These influences, however, sometimes cut across one another rather curiously. At an early stage in the development of the Queensland parliamentary Labour movement Glassey stood as a type of the extreme *doctrinaire-intransigent*, and Mat Reid as typical of the support in return for concessions point of view; but in 1900 Reid is leader of the isolation school, and Glassey, defying the Australian Labour Federation caucus, fights and beats Hinchcliffe, the nominee of the caucus, with the help of the Conservative vote. Similarly, Higgs in 1894 is the violent and rather venomous editor of the *Worker*. In 1899 he is a caucus man indeed, but one of those most inclined to a moderate Liberal standpoint. The same with others. These changes are all easily accountable, but the history of the Party must not be regarded as entirely simple; often it can only be explained, if it can be explained at all, by taking account of very subtle traditional and temporary influences.

Hinchcliffe's name has just been mentioned. The history of Hinchcliffe is the history of the movement. He was essentially an organizer, a wire-puller, although one of the least chronicled of the leading figures, and the ablest man of the whole connexion. His reports are masterly in policy and in style, and at many a crisis of the Party's history the influence of Hinchcliffe was the deciding factor,

It will not have escaped observation that, during the later years of the decade, the parliamentary training of the Labour Party did not make very distinguished progress. The members remained as they had set out, often rowdy, and always verbose. In October 1898, after the sudden death of the Premier, T. J. Byrnes, and the succession of the inexperienced and incompetent Dickson, the outrageous scenes of 1894 were repeated without their justification, and seven Labour members were suspended from the sittings of the Assembly for a week, after defying the Speaker on a point of procedure. Again, as late as December 1900, four Labour members were suspended during a scene which arose out of a Ministerial introduction of the guillotine. This latter episode calls attention to that other great fault of Labour in Parliament, their incurable tendency to make legislative progress impossible by futile discussion. It was just the same whether they approved of the substance of a measure or not; there was the same dull, unending flow of words. In 1898 the Labour Party discussed for six weeks the first twenty-five clauses of a Mining Bill comprising 240 clauses; in 1899 Parliament sat through the Christmas season, as the Government could not conclude its business owing to the garrulity and wilful obstruction of Labour members; and in the following year Philp's Railway Bills were blocked for three months, until the Government was at last provoked to amend the Standing Orders so as to have a modified form of the closure. Later the guillotine was adopted outright, the transaction of business being otherwise impossible.

Under these conditions, it would be idle to look for progressive legislation, and the results attributable to Labour influence from 1893 to 1901 are not very impressive. The first Liberal measure of the period, the Co-operative Settlements Act of October 1893, was an ill-fated one. The experiment was the result of much academic discussion of the subject, and was a phase of the enthusiasm of which the unfortunate

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expedition of Lane was a part. Twelve groups were founded with a membership of 485 ; at the end of 1894 the number had been reduced to 316, no crops of any extent had been raised, the efforts of the co-operators being still mainly directed to clearing the land and erecting buildings ; all the groups, having failed to prove themselves self-supporting, were receiving rations from the Government. At the end of 1895 five of the settlements were abandoned, and it was found necessary to introduce an amending Bill in order to save what remained from a similar fate. During 1894 a Bill for increasing the payment given to members of Parliament from £150 to £250 was carried by the Labour Party vote against the Ministry, but was thrown out summarily by the Council. On this, Hamilton, the member responsible for the Bill, insisted that the Assembly should assert its authority and add the necessary item to the supplementary estimates. To this the Ministry would not consent. The Labour Party was not long without its revenge, for when the adoption of the supplementary estimates was moved, Hamilton carried a motion for the adjournment of the House, and Nelson would have resigned had not a majority for the Ministry been eventually arranged. The Bill for increasing the remuneration of members was reintroduced into the Council but rejected on the second reading, and the proposal was dropped for a time. The feeling in Parliament was, however, so strongly in favour of the change that Nelson, about two years later, adopted the proposal as a Government measure and it became law on 24th August 1896.

In 1895 a Shops Early Closing Bill was introduced by the Government ; it was passed through the Assembly but thrown out by the Council. In the same year a slight concession to the Federated Seamen's Union was made by the Council, which agreed to a Shipping Act Amendment Bill, reducing the fee for employment certificates from 5s. to 6d. In 1896 a Factories and Shops Bill was introduced. and after slight amendment by the

Council became law. This was the one really considerable concession obtained by Labour during the whole period, and the circumstances attending its introduction were rather remarkable. Early in October, Macdonnell, a Labour member, moved the adjournment of the Assembly to call attention to the need for such a measure, and there was a seven-hours debate; it was generally thought that nothing would be done, especially in view of the presumed hostility of the Council, and it was therefore a surprise when, a fortnight later, Chief Secretary Tozer introduced the Bill, which had an easy passage through both Assembly and Council. The Act of 1896 did not go very far, but after a short experience its provisions were considerably extended, and the amending Act of 1900 was one of the most comprehensive found in any of the Australian colonies. In the Factories and Shops Act was embodied a provision for a compulsory half-holiday on Saturday, and the Labour Party could boast that in consequence of its efforts Queensland was the first colony to adopt the principle of a legal weekly half-holiday, which had been contended for by trade unionists in Australia for half a century.

When Parliament opened in 1897, among the projected Bills announced in the Governor's speech was one for the establishment of councils of conciliation, and as both sections of the Opposition were in favour of such a measure, for which they had long agitated, an easy passage through Parliament was predicted for it, but strange to say nothing further was heard of the measure. The explanation of this will be found in the fact that after the great strike of 1894 the Labour position in Queensland was not disturbed by any important industrial disputes, and, the urgency of a measure for conciliation having disappeared, politicians ceased to concern themselves about it. In the same session of Parliament an Electoral Amending Bill was introduced which Glassey described as containing "a modicum of good"; but he went on: "It is a poor paltry excuse for electoral reform and the merest pretence

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of what the people were led to expect." The Bill was passed, but the Labour Party was not able to secure its amendment in any important particular, and plural voting, with other things to which Labour greatly objected, continued to be law in Queensland until after the close of this period.

During 1898 a Workmen's Wages or Lien Act was passed which contained the usual provision forbidding the attachment of wages where they fell below £2 per week. There were other Acts passed during this period which might be classed as ameliorative, but the measures named were those which secured the most ardent support of the Labour Party, and which can with accuracy be ascribed to the influence of its presence in the House and its continual articulation of certain principles and grievances. The period was therefore not fruitful of concessions to Labour demands, but for Labour itself it was fruitful of experiences. The student will probably find Labour in Queensland a far more interesting study than Labour elsewhere in Australia, nor will it be the less interesting when its history is read in connexion with the flight to Paraguay. That informing episode demands a study, as much perhaps of human nature as of Labour politics, but does not come within the scope of this work.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As we have seen, the banking crisis in South Australia came some six years earlier than it did in the eastern colonies, and the general collapse which took place in Melbourne, in Brisbane, and to some extent in Sydney also, had no parallel in Adelaide. Nevertheless the effects of the crisis, commercial depression and unemployment, were just as pronounced in South Australia as elsewhere, and when the fourteenth Parliament assembled in June 1893 there was throughout the whole of the Province a feeling of great uneasiness and apprehension. On the one hand, the propertied classes were demanding rest

and quiet, with an abstinence from any legislative experiments which might further hazard the economic status of the Province; on the other, the vast body of unemployed were holding demonstrations and despatching deputations for the purpose of calling attention to their plight and to the instant need of ameliorative action.

The Downer Ministry had determined to face Parliament as it considered the verdict of the constituencies to be still in doubt. During the elections it had definitely pledged itself to several planks of the Labour platform and expected to have on that account the support of the Labour Party. It had promised to establish a Department of Industry, to secure workshop and factory reform and the repeal of the law allowing liens on workmen's wages. The limitation of candidates' electoral expenses was also promised, as well as the reintroduction of the Kingston Conciliation Bill.

The programme of business outlined in the Governor's speech coincided with these pre-election promises, but the Labour Party was determined not to be pleased with Downer and his friends. It complained that there was no promise of a free breakfast-table, that the Land Values Assessment Bill was not mentioned, and the proposal "to make future mortgagees chargeable with Land Tax to the extent of their interest in the land mortgaged" was a poor substitute for a progressive tax on unimproved values.

The question of the fate of the Government was soon put to the test. The Address-in-Reply having been duly moved and seconded, Holder declared that the constituencies had pronounced a verdict adverse to the Government and suggested that a speedy end should be made to the matter by a motion for adjournment. This was immediately proposed by Kingston and seconded by Playford, neither uttering a word of criticism of the administration; the Ministers, having nothing to reply to, also refrained from speaking. The question was put and carried by two votes, the Labour Party voting solidly with

the Opposition, and the Downer Government fell. A new Ministry was formed, with Kingston as Premier, on 16th June 1898, which included J. H. Gordon, Playford, Gillen, Holder, and Cockburn. Occasionally reconstructed, this Ministry lasted until 1st December 1899, a term of nearly six and a half years, so that the history of the remainder of this period consists mainly in that of the Kingston Administration.

The fall of Downer and the accession of his ambitious and energetic successor marks the end of the "group" system of Government which was characteristic of South Australia for a considerable period. The Liberal elements in the Assembly were now consolidated, so that no amount of manœuvre on the part of the Opposition could break up their alliance. The Opposition comprised the Conservatives, the Country Party, and some Independents. The connexion between these three Parties was very loose. The Conservatives, led by Downer in the Assembly and by Baker in the Council, were a well-defined body with definite aims; the Country Party was usually found opposed to the Government, but it was not averse from giving the Government support when a concession was to be obtained. The chief bond of union of the Independents was their common detestation of what they called the unnatural union between Liberalism and Labour, and their common hatred of experimental legislation of the kind that was to be a distinguishing mark of the new Parliament. Of constructive policy the Independents were practically destitute, and there was no one of particular ability among them.

Labour, which had effected this rearrangement of the political arena, had acted in the crisis as the party of balance, but it can scarcely be said to have held that position during the years that followed. There is no parallel between the relations of Reid with McGowen and those of Kingston with Macpherson. In the one case an opportunist adjusted his policy to the circumstances upon which depended his continuance in office but did it with

reluctance and with little grace ; in the other, Labour, which could not hope otherwise to influence the trend of legislation, deliberately ranged itself behind a Ministry intellectually possessed of a strong bias in the direction of a social policy. There was not during the entire course of the fourteenth Parliament a single hitch of a serious character between the Cabinet and the Labour wing. Occasionally, indeed, we find the Ministerialists and Labour at loggerheads, but never for long and never upon a really crucial point. On questions of minor importance the Labour members did not themselves always vote together, and sometimes enjoyed the liberty and satisfaction of being able to express opinions as to the logical deficiencies of their fellow-caucusites. The evidence of intimate and cordial relationships between Liberals and Labour is abundant. In July 1894 the Chief Secretary attended, at the premises of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Verein, a complimentary "social" tendered by the democratic associations of South Australia to the United Labour Party's candidates at the recent elections for the Council. That was an event that would scarcely have occurred at any time in New South Wales during the Reid Administration. Kingston was, of course, in spite of the lately ended split, a traditional intimate of Labour. We find him in the elections of 1896 speaking from the same platform as Price and successfully asking the United Labour Party to withdraw one of its candidates from Sturt, so that the election of his colleague, the Public Works Commissioner, should not be endangered. But the partnership, as it might well be called, between Kingston and Labour will be discussed in detail later on ; all that it is necessary to say here is that the parliamentary occurrences to which reference has been made, while they embrace many of the principal interests of the period, do not include them all.

- In the account of the Labour movement in South Australia during the preceding period, it was pointed out that the most noteworthy peculiarity of that movement

was the fact that it was but an element in a much wider democratic movement. Further, it was noticed that while the natural liberalism of the South Australian atmosphere so reacted upon the trade unionists in the Province as to lend to their objective a much more moderate and less sectional stamp than in the case of the other colonies, it was the trade unionist nucleus that first set in motion the various elements of democratic thought throughout the country to endeavour to express their "ethos" in legislation or at least in parliamentary activity. One of the most interesting questions, then, to which a study of this subject gives rise is, how far was the Labour or trade union movement in South Australia able to sustain and continue its co-operation with the democratic or middle-class movement, which was generally in sympathy with it? In New South Wales we have seen that the element represented by the Australian Labour Federation always dominated the Labour cause. In Queensland the political circumstances then prevailing not only drove Labour into violence and into opposition, but drove it, too, into isolation. How was it to be in South Australia, where in 1893 a very different issue promised? Co-operation between the unionists and democrats had been hindered up to that time by a provision dating from the early days of the movement, which stipulated that all direct candidates of the Party must be *bona fide* working men—that is, no name might be submitted at the preliminary plebiscite save that of a member of an association affiliated with the United Trades and Labour Council. The Council therefore had a paramount voice in the United Labour Party. This stipulation was carried in spite of the generous support given to Labour candidates by non-Labour democrats at the elections of 1893, and seemed to have its justification when wage-earners thus elected had taken their seats in the Assembly, where they showed themselves as assiduous as any older politicians and eager to learn the ways and manners of a deliberative assembly.

It remained, however, a notable anomaly that so con-

siderable a body of the electoral supporters of the United Labour Party should be disqualified for the position of direct representatives, and the anomaly was emphasized by an event which took place shortly after the elections. The Christian Sociological Society had urged upon the Party the desirability of promoting co-operation among the various democratic associations of the Province by means of a joint Convention at a suitable centre. The United Labour Party fell in with the suggestion, and in September 1893 a great "Reform Conference" was held, at which twenty-five societies were represented. The debates of the conference were lengthy and interesting, but the most conspicuous feature of the discussion was the way in which it concentrated itself upon the land question. The future of industry was scarcely touched upon, almost every speaker insisting that the break-up of the land monopoly was the key to social reconstruction.

The most articulate and fervent of the delegates were thus demonstrated to be, not the trade unionist adherents of the United Trades and Labour Council, but the doctrinaire democrats of the Single Tax League and kindred organizations. The effect of the conference was naturally to increase the influence of the non-unionist sections of the United Labour Party, and there at once arose a strong agitation in favour of widening the basis of the Party. After much discussion, the agitators succeeded in amending the objectionable provision in the rules of the United Labour Party so as to make it run as follows :

That any member of any association affiliated with the United Labour Party shall be eligible for nomination for the plebiscite for selecting candidates for the forthcoming Legislative Council elections, providing such nominee is prepared to sign a declaration agreeing to subscribe to the platform of the Party, and also that, in the event of his being unsuccessful in the ballot, he will not contest any electorate on his own account in which a Labour candidate is being run.

It will be observed that the amendment restricted the

application of the new rule to the Council elections then impending. The preliminary selection for the Council was made in March 1894, and among the candidates nominated were two of the leading members of the Single Tax League, J. N. Birks, a member as it happened of the United Labour Party's executive, who was by occupation a druggist, and C. Proud, a shorthand-writer and sharebroker. The Party was putting up four candidates, but only three were to be balloted for, as H. Adams, having been chosen by plebiscite for the Assembly elections in 1893, had been selected without reference to the ballot. When the result of the ballot was declared, McGregor headed the list with 1580 votes; following him came Birks (1112) and Proud (759). So that of the four ultimately chosen candidates two were single taxers. The single tax was not a plank in the Labour platform, and Birks was notoriously a Free Trader, although the United Labour Party was traditionally associated with the rival fiscal creed. Upon this the Coachmakers' Society and the Hindmarsh Brickmakers' Society loudly proclaimed themselves aggrieved; the latter threatened to secede and was only induced to reconsider its decision after a hurried visit from the Labour executive. Threats of secession could not, of course, change the result of the plebiscite, and the four selected Labour representatives went to the poll. The recalcitrants, however, revenged themselves at the polling booth. For the southern division McGregor was triumphantly returned; Birks and Proud in the central division and East Torrens respectively were ignominiously defeated, while Adams, Birks' unionist colleague, was elected at the head of the poll. Thereupon ensued a bitter contest in the executive of the Party, the single taxers attempting to remove the limitation "for the forthcoming . . . elections," the unionists to secure a return to the old restriction. Several trade unions submitted resolutions urging the latter course and there was more than one threat of secession; eventually it was decided to consult the whole membership of the Party on the disputed point.

A plebiscite was taken, which resulted in the adoption of the following definition of a direct representative :

The definition of a direct Labour representative shall be a person who is eligible to become a member of a Trades or Labour Society, which Trades or Labour Society is also eligible to become affiliated with the United Trades and Labour Council.

There can be no question, however various the construction a mind fortified by special pleading might place upon this rule, that in the minds of the trade unionists who voted for it this meant the exclusion of all but trade unionists ; and that this was the interpretation put upon it by the opponents of exclusion may be assumed from the action of the Democratic Club, in passing a motion disagreeing with the result of the plebiscite. Meanwhile, the United Labour Party was also discussing the result of the plebiscite. A general meeting was held at which a motion was made that " the Report (*i.e.* of the ballot) was unsatisfactory." After a long discussion the meeting adjourned without arriving at a decision, the Democrats and single taxers realizing that the verdict of the ballot could not be upset except by another ballot. It could, however, be explained away. To the executive of the Party the decision of the ballot was as unexpected as unpalatable, but that body was equal to the occasion. A Report was drawn up declaring that, under the definition adopted at the plebiscite, *any person* who subscribed to the platform was eligible for candidature, since any body of men could form a Trades or Labour Society. This Report was adopted, but not until after long discussion and considerable opposition, and for the time being the unionists were beaten.

Some few months before the occurrence of the events narrated, a Labour-Democratic paper had been founded under the name of the *Weekly Herald*, for the purpose of advertizing and propagating the views of the United Labour Party. The paper was ruled by a small committee appointed by the shareholders, and on this committee the

single taxers contrived to obtain a majority, with the result that there was danger of the pages of the *Herald* being devoted more to the advocacy of the single tax than social betterment. The editor, however, was not a single taxer, and chafed at the control of a party whose views were, in his opinion, to say the least, irrelevant to the principal aims of the United Labour Party. Preferring to satisfy his shareholders rather than his committee, he declared that he would no longer tolerate the contributions or the directions of his single tax masters, and the quarrel which ensued came to a head about the time the plebiscite was taken to decide upon the qualifications of a direct representative of Labour. The unionist shareholders of the *Weekly Herald* proved to be in a majority and speedily used their power to oust the single taxers from their position in connexion with the paper, and install in their place a managing committee of unimpeachable unionist orthodoxy.

The action of the executive of the United Labour Party in twisting the meaning of the approved definition of "direct Labour representative" to suit its views was greatly resented by a large proportion of the rank and file of the Party, but there was no open breach. The unions were awaiting a suitable opportunity for dealing with the matter, nor was this long delayed. In June 1895 the affiliated societies were asked, in view of the approaching elections, to forward the names of eight members who would be agreeable to them as candidates for the fifteenth Parliament. Under the rules of the Party these lists were to be cleared of the names of those ineligible or unwilling to stand, and the revised lists submitted to the primaries for final selection. The eight chosen in this manner with the eight sitting members would be the Party's candidates at the elections for the Assembly.

When the first lists were received it was found that Birks appeared on one list only, the names of other single taxers being conspicuous by their absence, and the final lists returned by the primaries resulted in the selection of

eight wage-earners, viz. an engine-fitter, a printer, a railwayman, a porter, a cabinetmaker, a boilermaker, the manager of the public baths, and a grocer. The Democratic candidates were thus driven from the field, and it will be seen that at the next conference of the Party their doctrines met with a like fate.

We may now turn to a consideration of the legislation passed or attempted during the first Parliament in which Labour was officially represented. But there is this distinction to be remembered in connexion with South Australia, that such social measures as were passed into law were not wrung from reluctant politicians, and were achieved by the Labour Party only in the sense that their votes weighed down the parliamentary balance on the side of a Ministry which needed no stimulus to exertion where social improvement was concerned, and in many ways was more democratic than the Labour Party itself.

The larger part of the measures put before Parliament by the Kingston Ministry figured in the programme of the Labour Party, but this does not imply that the Party originated them. They were the common property of the various democratic sections inside and outside Parliament and adopted by Labour since, according to the rules of parliamentary parties, a written programme was necessary. The Labour Party had not set itself the task of reorganizing the world or even South Australia; it was content to obtain what it could in the interest of manual labourers, and when Kingston went beyond this narrow ideal he did not always carry his friends of the Labour Party with him.

The parliamentary session of 1893 is interesting as much for its still-born measures as for those that found a place on the Statute Book. Among the former were two Bills of a novel character: one for the protection of homesteads, and the other to establish a system of life assurance. The Homestead Bill was of American parentage, and the Insurance Bill was derived from the New Zealand Acts of 1874 and 1890. It was described as being designed "to

provide for a system of State Life Assurance, giving to policy-holders the security of the public credit and the benefit, if desired, of inalienable annuities"; but it bore no trace of any scheme for compulsory insurance against accidents or sickness, or of the institution, now familiar but then deemed in the last degree Socialistic, of old age pensions. As was the case with its companion, this Bill was crowded out of discussion and shelved. A third measure was the Adult Suffrage Bill extending the franchise to women. It was introduced in August and thrown out in October, having failed to secure on the third reading the absolute majority necessary under the Constitution Act for such changes. Twenty-four voted for the Bill, twenty-three against, but the merits of the abstract question were somewhat obscured by the provision for a Referendum on the point, included in the Bill, and by the fact that, while the Opposition desired the retention of the property qualification for the Council, as contemplated by the Bill, the Labour Party was suspected of an intention of using the Bill as the means of assimilating the franchise of the Council to that of the Assembly. Other lost measures were the Kingston Conciliation Bill and a Factory Bill; both of these reached the Council, which gave them very short shrift.

We may turn now to the successful projects of the session. The first of these was the Bill for the imposition of a progressive scale of succession duties. This Bill had passed the Assembly four times under various Ministries, and had been as many times rejected by the Council. The Assembly having again passed it, the Council, or rather Sir Richard Baker and his friends, declared that the revenue would not be increased by it, and appointed a committee to inquire into the matter. The committee reported bluntly that the revenue would be "largely increased," and the Council at last permitted the measure to go through without amendment.

The Land Values Assessment Bill, so long a bone of contention amongst the various sections, was again intro-

duced, and passed by the Assembly; the Council, having emasculated it by providing for a poll as to the retention or abolition of the new system after two years' trial, such poll to be confined to ratepayers owning or leasing rateable property, at length allowed it to go through. It asserted a new principle, but it was by no means the Land Values Assessment Bill of the land tax enthusiasts in the shape in which it became law.

The inevitable Crown Lands Amendment Bill was rendered remarkable by the circumstance that, in its committee stage, the Ministers grafted upon it a scheme for the establishment of village settlements, by the aid of which it was expected the persistent difficulty of the unemployed would be greatly lessened. The Bill was received with great goodwill by Parliament and with enthusiasm by the working classes, but the issue, as we have seen, was profoundly disappointing. The list of betterment measures passed during the session of 1893 may be closed with two that had been several times before Parliament, a Workmen's Lien Act and a Mining Act. The latter was designed to encourage the search for minerals and to regulate employment in mines. In the measure as introduced was a provision for the prohibition of the employment of women and children, and another for an eight-hours day. The Council was willing to pass either of these, but not both, and gave the Assembly its choice. That Chamber chose the clause prohibiting the employment of women and children, and the eight-hours working day was struck out.

The session of 1894 did not see the loss of any considerable Government measure of a social kind save the State Advances Bill; on the other hand, some notable enactments, which had previously been refused passage by the Council, now became law. Amongst these were the Kingston Conciliation Bill, a Taxation Act embodying a modified form of progressive land and income taxes, and the Adult Suffrage Bill, shorn of the provision for the taking of a Referendum. A Workmen's Compensation

Act was also passed, repealing the Acts of 1884 and 1889, and declaring an employer liable for accidents caused by any person in his service; knowledge on the part of a workman of the risk he was taking not being deemed to be an acceptance of that risk. To these triumphs was added the passing of the Factory Bill in a form practically the same as that in which it had reached the Council in the preceding year.

As it grew older the Kingston Ministry showed no slackness in the cause of betterment legislation, and in 1895 it introduced an Early Closing Bill, a Bill to extend and reduce the qualifications of electors of the Council, and a Bill amending the Employers' Liability Act of the previous year. These were all lost in the Council. One progressive measure was, however, passed after various vicissitudes due to the uncertainty of the Government as to its own policy. This was the Bill for the establishment of a Post Office Savings Bank. The State Advances Bill of the previous year had contemplated the reorganization of the existing savings bank and the issue of Government stock for the purpose of providing funds out of which advances to settlers might be made. The Bill was reintroduced in October 1895, and in committee the Government tried to graft upon it certain amendments which would have had the effect of creating a State Bank. The amendments were ruled out of order and the Bill was withdrawn. A new Bill providing for the establishment of a State Bank was introduced later in the session and, passing through all its stages, became law on 20th December 1895.

The policy of betterment, shown by its legislative proposals, was not neglected by the Kingston Government in its administration of the public departments, and that it was not carried to greater lengths may be attributed rather to lack of money than lack of will. The subletting of Government contracts was strictly prohibited, and the system of day labour would have been introduced in carrying out all public works, had the Province

been in a position to pay for that expensive luxury. The outlines of an elaborate State export department were agreed upon. This department was designed ultimately to control the marketing, handling, and export of all South Australian produce, but for the time being the Government contented itself with setting up a wine and produce depot in London and a freezing works at Port Adelaide.

The Labour Party was very well pleased with its connexion with Kingston, and had grown to appreciate the solid advantages of following the parliamentary method. When it met in 1896 to consider and revise its platform, the result of its labours was embodied in the following demands :

1. The cessation of the alienation of Crown lands and the substitution of a system of leasing.
2. The remission of the duties on tea in bulk, raw coffee, cocoa, kerosene, and upon articles which cannot be grown or produced in the colony ; any resulting deficiency in the revenue to be made up by increased land value taxation.
3. Amendment of Land Values Assessment Act of 1893 on the lines of F. J. Hornigan's Bill of 1895.
4. Encouragement of local industries, and the further development of the resources of the colony.
5. A Steam-boilers' Inspection and Registration Bill ; an Early Closing Bill ; reform of the shipping laws ; amendment of the Employers' Liability Act ; amendment of the Liens Act of 1893 ; minimum rates of wages and maximum hours of work in Government contracts and works.
6. Electoral law amendment, by giving greater facilities for the registration and transfer of electors, and a redistribution of seats on the basis of population.
7. Reform of the Legislative Council in the direction of shortening the term of membership and liberalizing the franchise to leaseholders and occupiers.
8. The establishment of a department of Labour.
9. The extension of the functions of a State Bank.
10. State ownership of all railways.
11. Repeal of the Indian Immigration Acts ; prohibition of the influx of Asiatic and servile races ;

restriction of the introduction of immigrants bound to service before arrival in South Australia.

12. The introduction of the Referendum on the lines of Batchelor's Bill of 1895.
13. The extension of the State export department for wheat, wool, wine, and other agricultural and horticultural produce, by giving assistance in the shape of advances and facilities for transit, so that producers may be able to obtain the full benefit of foreign markets.
14. Mortgagors' Liability Limitation Bill.
15. Encouragement and development of the mining industry.
16. Federation on a democratic basis.

This programme has two chief characteristics: it is not in the least doctrinaire, all suggestion of aiming at a social revolution is absent, and there is evidently a drifting farther away from the non-Labour democratic section; there is also a strong consideration shown for the interests of primary producers and small landowners as distinct from trade unionists. There was nothing very new in this programme, and nothing that Kingston himself would not have proposed if the straitened condition of the finances of the Province had not prevented him from giving full rein to his ideas. Co-operation between Kingston and Labour during the next Parliament was practically assured on the adoption by the Party of its platform of 1896.

The elections of 1896 resulted in the return of 13 Ministerialists, 16 nominees of the National Defence League, an Independent Party of 11, and 12 Labour representatives. The weakness of the direct support accorded to the Government served to invite an attempt to form a party directly representative of the agricultural and pastoral interests of the Province, which, holding the balance of power between the Kingston Labour combination and the Conservatives, would be able to obtain justice for the producing interests. By justice was meant, of course, special attention at the expense of the other interests of the country. The prospects of such a party had been a matter of discussion during the lifetime of the

previous Parliament. The "country" feeling was strongly reinforced at the elections of 1896 when the Labour associations, instead of confining their electoral ambitions to the seats of population in the Central and the mining districts, extended their operations to the country electorates, and succeeded in returning two members for these last; and further, when King O'Malley, whose elective career began in South Australia at this juncture, was returned to represent the genial interests of universal fraternity by the electors of Encounter Bay.

The beginnings of the Country Party movement declared themselves at Gladstone towards the end of May, when a number of local farmers met together in convention and agreed to constitute themselves and so many as would support their programme, the "Progressive League of South Australia." The membership of the new organization grew rapidly, and the following statement of its creed and intentions was drawn up :

1. Longer tenures and lower rates for pastoralists.
2. To stop the efflux of yeomanry, repurchase of estates at a fair valuation, and a land tax to be collected and expended locally.
3. No progressive land tax.
4. Mortgage liability.
5. Village settlement extension.
6. Labour bureau.
7. Land-lease railways.
8. Referendum.
9. The qualification for the Legislative Council to be lowered to £20.
10. Technical education.
11. Federation.
12. Electoral registration facilities.
13. No alien immigration.
14. Taxation according to means and benefits.
15. Cheap carriage for dairy produce.

This is an interesting and somewhat rare indication of the real opinion of the most stable section of the community and the one which at this time held the balance. It also shows that as regards fundamental principles the farmers

leaned much more to the extreme Left than to the Conservatives. There were, however, members of the Assembly who were of the Country Party and did not relish the idea of a new organization being formed to represent the interests of which they conceived themselves the particular guardians. The Ministry also felt uneasy at the appearance of an independent body which might weaken the position of its supporters in their constituencies. There were consultations between the Ministry and the Liberal wing of the Country Party in the Assembly, and the result of these was seen when R. W. Foster, an agile member of that Party and very well disposed towards the Ministry, took an early opportunity in Parliament of warmly commending the Gladstone movement. But it was not long before Foster and his friends announced the formation of the "South Australian Liberal Union," the objective of which was "the banding together of Liberals in each electoral district of South Australia for the purpose of advancing the well-being of the Community." The Union, it was declared, would support the present system of payment of members, and would oppose any scheme for redistributing seats on a population basis. It desired a reduction of the electoral qualification for the Legislative Council, and the retirement every three years of half the members of that body. It approved of progressive taxation, but what was meant by such taxation it conveniently left undefined, and declared itself opposed to any reduction in the £5000 land tax exemption then in force. As regards rural industries, it expressed its belief in the necessity of State advances to producers and in State assistance to the same body of electors in the matter of export. It believed, further, in the development of the interior by Liberal pastoral legislation, in Federation, and in the restriction of coloured immigration.

It will be seen that Foster and his friends were politicians of mettle. Very reasonably might the discomfited *Register* suggest that an action for plagiarism lay with the United

Labour Party against the new Union. The Country Party movement was arrested for a time and the Progressive League was practically blotted out.

The prospects for the session which began in June 1896 seemed excellent for the Kingston movement. In four out of seven Australasian colonies the Ministries in office were supported by Labour groups, but in none was the alliance happier or more promising than in South Australia. The Premier spoke publicly of the "good old Labour Party," and denied that Liberals and Labourites could in any way be distinguished one from the other. The Labour Party was also well pleased with Kingston, especially congratulating itself on the successful issue of the late elections and the fact that the Education Referendum which had been taken in conjunction with them had exercised, in an obvious and useful manner, one of the principles of that Party.

The Ministerial proposals for the session included a number of projects dear to the heart of the Democratic associations. About elective Ministries, the triennial retirement of members of the Council and land repurchase for subdivision there might be differences of opinion; but there could be none about the extension of the Referendum, early closing, the establishment of life assurance annuities, the amendment of the Employers' Liability Act and of the shipping laws, and, above all, the great task of reducing the franchise for the Upper House.

When the achievements of the session came to be reckoned up, however, at the end of the year, it was found that the vicissitudes of division and debate had wrought havoc with the glad prospect unfolded in the Governor's speech. The Council Bill had been quickly introduced into the Chamber it principally affected in June. As had been the case with the Bill of the previous year, the franchise for the Upper House was extended to leaseholders who had effected improvements to the value of £200, while the householder qualification was reduced from £25 to £15. The second reading was indeed carried by twelve votes to

eleven, but inasmuch as there was not the statutory majority required for a constitutional change, the Bill was laid aside. The Early Closing Bill of the previous session made a reappearance in a modified form; shopkeepers having no assistants were exempted. The Act was limited, further, in its application to the metropolitan electoral districts only; its extension to other districts might only be proclaimed in compliance with an Address passed by *both* Houses in a single session. Finally, the vote was to be taken among shopkeepers, not among electors, a vital alteration which changed the whole spirit of the measure. But even thus modified the Bill only got through the Assembly altered beyond recognition. In the Council it was thrown out on the second reading. The Closer Settlement Bill was withdrawn, while Hornigan's Land Values Assessment Bill and O'Malley's measure for enforcing seating accommodation for shop assistants were dropped after a few nights had been spent in their discussion.

The two successes of the session were a Bill amending the Workmen's Lien Act and a Coloured Immigration Restriction Bill. The former of these measures gave relief to brick manufacturers, quarry owners, slate merchants, and the like by classing them as sub-contractors, so that they might have a lien in respect of goods delivered. The Restriction Bill, which was directed especially against the Japanese, extended the exclusion already operating against the Chinese to all coloured peoples, including coloured Indian subjects of the Crown. No vessel might in the future carry more than one coloured immigrant for every 500 tons burthen. The Bill, though it passed both Houses, did not become law, as it was reserved for the Queen's assent, which, on the advice of the Imperial Government, was withheld.

The year 1897 was marked by the considerable distractions of the Adelaide and Sydney sessions of the Federal Convention, and of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, which involved the absence of the Premier from the colony during several months of the year. Partly for this reason,

the legislative record of the year is almost entirely barren. Much was attempted, but the only ameliorative measure that reached the Statute Book was a Lands Repurchase Act, which was opposed by the Labour Party. This was a very critical year for the United Labour Party; there was, of course, this amazing legislative sterility, all the more important because the administration of the Ministry had never been beyond reproach, while the late drought, the serious and long-drawn-out trouble over the Adelaide hospital control and the critical condition of the pastoral industry, added to its difficulties and embarrassments. There was also the problem of Federation, here as elsewhere a subject on which the Labour group was sharply divided from all other Parties, whether these were favourable or hostile to Federation; and lastly, there was the question of Labour solidarity, which was raised in an acute form during this year.

The result of the elections for the Federal Convention in March 1897 appeared to show that the hold of the Labour Party on the constituencies was weakening. The Ministry had placed the names of five Labour members on its official ticket, but in spite of this the elections resulted in the rejection of all the Labour candidates and the return of four Ministers and six nominees of the Defence League. This was a blow which influenced the whole attitude of Labour to the great problem before the Australian people. A few weeks later Labour sustained a second disaster, almost if not quite as paralysing. It had been decided to run only one candidate for the Southern district at the elections for the Legislative Council in this year; and a strong man was selected in Kirkpatrick, a retiring member. For the Central districts the United Labour Party ran two candidates, Guthrie, a retiring member, and Hutchison. Of these three, Guthrie alone was successful, and the defeat of Kirkpatrick by Sandford, an out-and-out farmer's man, bore testimony to the late awakening of the primary producers to their political power and responsibilities.

These reverses rendered the executive of the United

Labour Party somewhat querulous and intolerant and therefore ill-fitted to deal with affairs requiring nice tact and judgment. Such an occasion followed hard upon the elections. On 18th August 1897 Charleston, one of the earliest and ablest champions of the Party, resigned his seat as a member of the Legislative Council, and at the same time his union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, severed its connexion with the United Labour Party. Charleston attributed his action to resentment at the way in which the independence of the Party was sacrificed to a blind allegiance to the Government. The issues were very complicated. Charleston was furiously blamed and as furiously supported, but in the main his own account of the motive of his action may be accepted; we have here the first revolt of a highly intelligent Labour man against the eccentricity and the advanced betterment of the Kingston platform, an indication of a possible revolt which was never indeed quite to happen, but which was often on the verge of breaking out during the next few years.

There is no need to go into the details of the affair. Roberts, an "honorary" member of the United Labour Party and the representative in the Assembly for Gladstone, was accused by Charleston of endeavouring to influence Liberal voters against him; while Price charged Charleston with coming to an improper arrangement with Dr. Magarey, a fellow-councillor, by which Charleston would attack the Government on the hospital question, and Magarey in return would so control the election of 1896 as to give Charleston the support of the Defence League and thereby make certain of his return to the Council.

Charleston himself declared he had long been conscious of a growing estrangement between himself and the United Labour Party, which he dated from the assistance he had extended four years previously to the Land Settlement Aid Society. It seems quite clear that the general feeling of the Labour Party, members and leaders alike, was hostile to Charleston, and that this hostility was due to a certain eclectic standpoint he had recently adopted. He

had refused to support the Government whole-heartedly on the hospital controversy, insisting that his poorer constituents were especially concerned with the efficient conduct of that institution. He had been impressed with the parlous condition of the pastoral industry, and, contrary to the view of his fellow-unionists, he was anxious to see something done by Parliament to make squatting tenures easier and to extend to the squatters some of the facilities granted to farmers. He had refused to consider that the Boiler Explosions Bill was a necessary measure, thereby coming into violent collision with his fellow-councillor, Guthrie. He declined to share the suspicion with which a certain very expensive railway deviation scheme was regarded by his fellow Labour members, and finally he considered that the Commonwealth Bill was now "thoroughly democratic." Hence the inquiry that during the winter and spring of 1897 was bandied about in the Labour ranks—"What is wrong with Charleston?"

The conduct of Roberts made Charleston's retirement probable; the accusation of Price made it certain. He resigned his seat and, when he sought re-election, was matched against a Labour opponent in Hutchison. During the contest Kingston, who was at Sydney attending the Federal Convention, wrote to Charleston reproaching him in violent terms for working against the Ministerial and Labour candidates at the Federal Convention ballot, an impeachment which Charleston seems to have publicly admitted. The action of the Premier confirms Charleston's own contention that his resignation was to be regarded as a revolt against Ministerial domination. Charleston won back his seat by seven hundred odd votes.

The meagre record of legislation accomplished during the parliamentary session in which the Charleston affair had occurred has already been mentioned. Early in July 1897 McGregor had asked Parliament to concede that prominent plank in the Labour platform, a free breakfast table. "It would cost," said the Treasurer, "£58,000; we cannot at this juncture afford to give up £58,000, and

there are to be no more Land Taxes." And so the demand was refused. The Early Closing Bill had reached the Council, where the Labour councillors endeavoured to have it amended so that the majority required in any area to secure the operation of the Act should be an absolute majority and not a three-fifths majority; the Council refused to agree to this, and the Labour members joined the Opposition in having the Bill thrown out. In October there was serious trouble between the Labour members and the Ministry concerning the proposal to adjourn Parliament during the sittings of the Federal Convention in Sydney, which Labour deemed expensive and unnecessary. In December the Ministry was beaten on its proposal to reduce the railway vote by £20,000 and forced to accept a counter-amendment from Batchelor, who was now leading the Party in succession to Macpherson, reducing the vote by only £10,000.

The experience of the parliamentary session of 1897 and the events of the recess brought about a change in the attitude of Labour towards Kingston. This was probably influenced by the fiery speeches of Ben Tillett, who visited the Province during the latter part of 1897, and by the retirement of Cockburn from the Ministry on his appointment to the position of Agent-General in London. The older members of the Party were keen judges of changes in public opinion and, in the view of several of them, the Party had suffered in the constituencies by its failure to recognize the strength of Charleston's contention that its independence had been sacrificed to Kingston. The Premier was undoubtedly as firmly bent as ever upon passing ameliorative legislation, but the measure of his zeal and of his success differed widely. The majority of the Party was, however, faithful to the Kingston connexion and, still fascinated by the fertility of his legislative ideas, ignorant or incapable of realizing his profound incompetency in all matters of business or administration.

The Ministry was not unaware of various signs of discontent, but taking no blame to itself for any failure of

legislative performance, felt that the best way to win back confidence and show the world the flourishing character of the Coalition was to bring in a programme bristling with measures of amelioration. The Governor's speech of the session of 1898 presented such a programme, and Hutchison, who had been elected for Macpherson's seat, was asked to move the Address-in-Reply. A shrewd item in the speech was the announcement of the refusal of the Government to take part in the Premiers' Conference, rendered necessary by the action of New South Wales on 3rd June 1898 in refusing the statutory majority required to pass the Convention Bill. This, of course, was a sop to the anti-Federal views of the Labour group. A scheme of State assurance was foreshadowed, also a measure, on the lines of the Natal Act, to restrict coloured immigration, household suffrage for the Council, land repurchase, employers' liability, and an amendment to the Act regulating workmen's liens. All these proposals had already been before Parliament; the principal new items were the suspension of Crown land alienation, affirmed as desirable by a resolution of the Assembly during the previous session, an amendment to the Factories Act, on the lines of Victorian legislation and designed to put an end to sweating, and, lastly, the initiative with the Referendum, a constitutional change greatly favoured by the Labour Party.

In face of this singularly liberal banquet, Hutchison's speech was a little wanting in gratitude. He complained with some acerbity of the administration of the Government, especially of its factory inspection and of its Labour Bureau; he rejoiced openly on the late apostasy of New South Wales in regard to Federation, and spoke derisively of the Natal Act. When Downer moved that "we wish to inform your Excellency that we are dissatisfied with the present Government," and a few days later when Glynn moved that "we have no confidence in the administration of your Excellency's advisers," there was some question as to how Labour would vote. There was

some expectation that it might resort to desperate measures in order to checkmate Federation. But there could hardly have been any serious temptation to delay Federation by voting one Federal Ministry out of office only to vote another in, especially when the old Ministry was Kingston's, and the new one would be that of Downer, a fervent Tory, or of Glynn, an enthusiastic Federalist. Batchelor, indeed, gave notice of a motion that "we have no confidence in the administration of your Excellency's advisers, but agree generally with the legislative proposals contained in the speech of your Excellency." The motion, however, was never put and Labour voted solidly for Kingston against Downer. The decision of the Labour Party could not have been otherwise. The points chosen by Glynn and Downer for their indictment of the Kingston Ministry,—extravagance in connexion with public works, the use of the Referendum, the struggle with the Council,—were just those upon which Labour had long made up its mind in an opposite direction.

The session of 1898 proved nearly as unsatisfactory as that of the preceding year. The Early Closing Bill, the Merchant Seamen's Bill, the Seating in Shops Bill, the Workmen's Compensation Bill, the Household Suffrage Bill, the Bill to suspend the further alienation of Crown Lands, Hornigan's amendment to the Land Values Assessment Bill, and the State Assurance Bill all failed to achieve their passage into law, though the first four succeeded in reaching the Council. The most important achievement of the session was the passage of a Pastoral Act embodying the recommendations of the recent commission, conceding lower rents and longer tenures, and abolishing the classification of runs. Labour had to be content with an act for establishing free public libraries, a Health Act increasing the powers of the local and Central Boards, and a Wages Attachment Act, abolishing attachment in the case of wages under £2 per week.

The weakness of the Ministerial position lay in the Council, where Labour had been most unfortunate. Kirk-

patrick had failed to secure re-election, Charleston had seceded, while two others returned by Liberal votes, Campbell and Haslam, had died. It was not a favourable time to bring matters to an issue, but Kingston was now tired of his Sisyphean labour and had resolved that he would no longer press his measures of amelioration through the Assembly only to see them, with dull regularity, thrown out by the Council. Between December 1898 and May 1899, the political situation became completely dominated by the relations between the two houses. The aim of Kingston was to get such a mandate from the country as would make his position at least tolerable; whilst his opponents sought, by sterilizing the efforts of his Government, to bring about disaffection between the Liberals and the Labour Party, so that the allies would no longer go to the polls hand in hand. By this means they hoped to obtain at the approaching elections such a condemnation of the household suffrage movement as would make them strong enough to overturn the Ministry, even if the Labour Party should return to its former alliance. For the present the Country Party was not yet solid enough to exercise its power as the balancing factor in the Assembly and the Conservatives were not sufficiently numerous to act alone.

The crisis began in December 1898. The Household Suffrage Bill, with a provision for the taking of a Referendum upon it before it should become law, had been carried in the Assembly towards the end of November by a substantial majority of 17, after an attempt to secure a compromise, of which the Labour Party would hear nothing, in the direction of a £15 rental, with the female vote. The Bill met its usual fate at the hands of the Council, and on 20th December Kingston stated that "the Government proposed that the Constitution of the Legislative Council should be reformed by the substitution of adult suffrage for the present property qualifications, thus assimilating the franchise for both Houses of the local Legislature to the franchise in South Australia for both

Houses of the Federal Parliament. The Government also intended to take a Referendum of all adult electors on the proposal at the next General Election for the House of Assembly." On this the angry councillors adjourned their sittings until 17th January 1899 without passing the Appropriation Bill. Herein lay the possibility of a constitutional impasse of the first order. Fortunately the situation was somewhat modified and the dignity of the Council preserved by a debate in the Assembly on 28th December, in which the Premier, instead of continuing to claim the right of the Executive to take a Referendum on a specific proposal which had been rejected by Parliament, took the lower ground that the Assembly "affirms its right to direct consultation with its constituents by means of the Referendum." So that when the Council met in January it was content with recording a protest, and subsequently finished off the business of the session.

In April 1899 the United Labour Party issued a revised platform differing in several particulars from that of 1896. The additions included demands for a Steam Boiler Explosions Bill, Early Closing Bill, Workmen's Compensation Bill including Seamen, amendment of Shops and Factories Act, fixing a minimum rate of wages and maximum hours where practicable, abolition of distress for rent, State insurance, old age pensions and any reasonable and equitable claim of women for the amendment of the laws.

At the General Election of 1899 the Party put forward thirteen candidates, five of whom were to contest country constituencies, and Poynton, Roberts, and Hooper, though still members of the United Labour Party, were not nominated by that body and ran independently. Wood, who had been expelled from the Party, on account of his adherence to Charleston, was not opposed for North Adelaide, as it seemed certain that no United Labour candidate could wrest the seat from him. As the result of the election, Labour saw five of its candidates rejected, so that it had only eight direct representatives, but as

Poynton, Roberts, and Hooper secured election, the total strength of the Party was still eleven. The Ministerialists suffered even more severely, losing four seats, King O'Malley being one of the rejected.

The opportunity of the election was utilized for taking a vote on the Federal Enabling Bill and on the vexed question of the relations between the two Houses, and electors were asked to answer the following questions :

1. Are you in favour of the amended Commonwealth Bill ?
2. Are you in favour of extending the franchise for the Legislative Council to all householders as provided in the Bill passed by the House of Assembly in 1898 ?

The first question was answered almost unanimously in the affirmative ; but that in regard to household suffrage for the Council was approved by a majority of 5000 only, a poor percentage of the electors taking the trouble to vote, and in spite of his majority Kingston could hardly claim a mandate for reforming the Council. The indifference with which the Referendum in regard to the Legislative Council was treated is an interesting illustration of the dilettante nature, or perhaps the casualness, of public opinion in the Province ; which, while it was not disinclined to look with tolerant interest on the numerous proposals for amelioration put forward by the little school of Liberal statesmen to whom the political power of the Province had been entrusted, was apparently content to know that all such proposals or experiments would not meet with undue favour from the Legislative Council.

The session of 1899 saw the reintroduction of the rejected proposals for amelioration : the Boiler Explosions Bill, the Closer Settlement Bill, the Early Closing Bill, the Land Values Assessment Bill, the Workmen's Compensation Bill, and the Household Suffrage Bill. All these met with their accustomed fate, the only betterment Bill accepted by the Council being that for the establishment of Inalienable State Life Policies. These

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various rejections, however galling to the Labour Party, did not diminish its confidence in Kingston. There was indeed no part of the Labour programme on which Kingston was not as sound as the best of its members; he had moreover promised a State Bank of Issue and Deposit, and a Workshops and Factories Act which would include the formation of Trade Boards for the suppression of sweating; and he was definitely pledged to press the constitutional question to an issue favourable to Labour views. None of the attempts made to weaken the Kingston Labour Alliance had much promise of success, but, unfortunately for Kingston, it was not the Labour Party but the Country Party which now held the balance. .

At the end of October 1899 the direct Opposition made an attempt on the Government. The propriety of members of the local legislature having seats in the Federal Parliament had been a matter of considerable discussion, and Solomon, the leader of the Opposition, had a motion on the notice paper designed to prevent any member of the South Australian Parliament becoming a member of the Federal legislature, while retaining his local seat. Solomon, confident of support, intimated that he would endeavour to put his motion before the Government business, and Kingston declared that any such attempt would be treated as a motion of no-confidence. Whereupon the Labour Party anxiously went into caucus. The Party was strongly against dual membership; but, fearful of weakening Kingston's position, it decided to support the Government on the main question, at the same time letting it be known that it would insist that Solomon's motion should not be shelved. This attempt by the direct Opposition failed, but the end of the Ministry came three weeks later at the hands of Burgoyne and the Country Party.

Burgoyne had voted for the Household Suffrage Bill in 1898 and again in 1899, but a rumour had become current that, in the event of the rejection of the Bill by the Council, now that a favourable Referendum had been taken, the Premier intended to dissolve both Houses.

Parliament was scarcely six months old and its natural instinct of self-preservation was outraged by such a proposal. On 28th November the intentions of the Premier became known. In reply to a question from Hooper, he undertook not to offer his services to the Federal Parliament until household suffrage was law in South Australia. "The matter is personal to myself, and I feel it deeply," said Kingston; "at the same time, notwithstanding that I regret relinquishing my Federal aspirations, my answer is that I give the assurance asked for and will be true to the cause and will not desert my followers." A little later he was asked whether he had changed his mind with reference to declaring his policy about a dissolution in the event of the Council rejecting the Suffrage Bill. He replied that the Ministry had not changed its mind. Another member, referring to a current rumour, then asked whether any member of the Ministry had stated that the Government did not intend to dissolve the Assembly. "It is a gross fabrication," cried Kingston. The impending dissolution was now beyond question, and Burgoyne rose to move the adjournment. Twenty-six voted against the Ministry, twenty-five for it; with the Ministry were all the Labour members, save Poynton and Roberts.

Labour's fidelity was somewhat unexpected. Earlier in the month four of the Party had joined in an attempt to take the control of the business of Parliament out of the hands of the Government, and on 21st November a little more than a week before, Price, speaking on the contracting-out clause of the Workmen's Compensation Bill in committee had said: "I have no confidence in the administration of the Government, and this clause will give them another lever that will enable them to come out on top, and the men will go down. . . ." It was the old alternative, the legislation that the Party liked and the administration that it distrusted, but in the present instance it could not refuse to support a man who had promised to sacrifice a long-cherished ambition to the reform of the Upper House.

Kingston asked for a dissolution, but was refused; and Solomon, having been sent for, speedily formed a Cabinet, with himself as Premier and Treasurer; Glynn, Attorney-General; Stirling, Chief Secretary; Rounsevell, Public Works Commissioner; Poynton, Crown Lands Commissioner; and Burgoyne, Minister of Education and Agriculture.

Poynton had accepted Solomon's offer of office without having obtained the consent of his Party, with which his connexion was now broken, and he carried no one with him. On meeting Parliament, the new Premier announced his intention of moving for a Select Committee "to consider the alteration of the Constitution relative to Federation and the Council Franchise." His own preference was for a £20 franchise and a dual vote; he would like, further, to extend the vote to leaseholders at £20, or to those who had spent £200 in improvements; also to occupiers of mineral leases. This announcement proved to be his ruin. The Country Party was definitely committed to a £15 franchise and Solomon was hardly in office before he was out again. He recommended that Playford should be commissioned to form a Government, but to this the Labour and Country Parties announced their hostility, and after a little hesitation Holder was sent for and formed a Cabinet comprising:

Premier, Treasurer, and Minister			
for Industry	.	.	F. W. Holder.
Attorney-General	.	.	J. H. Gordon.
Public Works	.	.	R. W. Foster.
Chief Secretary	.	.	J. G. Jenkins.
Education	.	.	E. L. Batchelor.
Crown Lands	.	.	L. O'Loughlin.

The most interesting persons in the new Cabinet are Batchelor and Foster. Batchelor's acceptance of office, as distinguished from that of Poynton in the late Cabinet, was blessed by the United Labour Party, and his place as leader was taken by Tom Price. Foster represented the left wing of the Country Party which had always displayed Liberal tendencies, and the combination of Labour, Country Party and Liberals gave assurance that the legislative tradition

of the Kingston regime, so far as betterment was concerned, would be amply maintained.

Holder took up the threads of business as they had been left on the fall of the Ministry of all the talents. But the late crises and the debates attendant on the despatch of contingents to South Africa were fatal to the legislative record.

The most interesting event of the year 1900 outside Parliament was a conference, suggested by the United Labour Party, between representatives of that Party, the Free Trade Association and the Single Tax League. There was no special motive assigned for the meeting, but it is evident the Unionists were becoming convinced of the necessity of more cordial co-operation with the Democrats, if the representation of Labour was ever to be considerably extended. The Conference achieved little except to display the good-will of the various associations.

Kingston, before sailing for England as Federal delegate, resigned his seat for West Adelaide, and the United Labour Party put up a candidate against Denny, Kingston's nominee; this action brought it no credit, as its candidate was defeated by a large vote. In his absence Kingston was nominated for the Legislative Council for the district of East Torrens, but was defeated; he was able, however, to secure a seat for the Central District in September. The elections for the Council which saw the defeat of Kingston witnessed the return of Kirkpatrick to the Council, though his fellow-Labourite, Robinson, was third on a poll headed by the Conservative candidate. In addition to this reverse in the Labour stronghold, the Ministry suffered two other defeats in the Council elections; but the most sinister aspect of the elections, from the standpoint of the constitutional reformers, was the appalling apathy shown by the electors to the issues put before them. There was scarcely a candidate who was able to awaken any vital interest in his discussion of public affairs or get together even a moderate-sized audience.

Holder nevertheless did not drop the extension of the Council franchise from his platform; indeed, he was powerless to do so, mandate or no mandate. His new Bill conferred the vote in Council elections upon all householders, all persons in actual occupation as owners or tenants of any land on which there were improvements to the value of £200, the property of such persons, and the wife or husband of any person whose name was registered on any electoral roll of electors for members of the Council. The Bill was introduced into the Council, which by 12 to 7 votes cut out the first clause extending the suffrage to householders, and with this alteration it was passed; but the Government refused to accept or even consider the amendment, and the measure was dropped. The session of 1900 was not unfruitful, however, in other directions. The Land Values Assessment Bill, the Early Closing Bill, the Factories and Workshops Act Amendment Bill, and the Workmen's Compensation Bill all passed in some form or other. The Compensation Bill was introduced in the Council and, in spite of Guthrie's efforts, was only got through after the exclusion of seamen from its application. The Factories Bill was only passed after a conference between the two branches of the Legislature; it was a great advance on the tentative measure of 1894. The Victorian Wages Board system was adopted, and a definition of the term "factory" was employed which was much wider than that of the Victorian Act. The Early Closing Bill, which resembled very closely the New South Wales Act, was introduced in the Council. It was not sympathetically received, as may be seen from the exemption of eleven classes of shops from the operation of the law. In its final form the Act enabled a majority of shopkeepers in any country district to petition the Government to gazette hours of closure and to appoint a weekly half-holiday. In view of these considerable achievements it is small wonder that Solomon's motion of no-confidence on an item in the estimates in August failed to attract Labour from its alliance. The close of the 1900 session brings us to the

brink of Federation, with its inevitable change of personnel and atmosphere.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The awakening of the working classes to the importance of political action did not come to Western Australia until long after the Labour Parties were well established in the eastern colonies. The first definite movement to influence the political life of the colony began in October 1893, when the Trades and Labour Council of Perth joined with the Democratic Club and the Reform Club, two societies of liberal political views, in forming the Political Progressive League. The new society was not ostensibly a Labour organization, but Labour played a very important part in shaping its action. Falconer and Chitty Baker, the President and Secretary of the Council, held like offices in the new body, and other well-known Labour men were prominent in its ranks.

In view of the General Election the League drew up a platform, which it published in December 1893, containing the following chief points: Equal adult suffrage; the holding of all elections on one day; payment of members and triennial Parliaments; the prohibition of Asiatic immigration under contract or otherwise; the taxation of unimproved land values; the establishment of courts of conciliation; the adoption of the eight-hours system on all Government work and the abolition of sub-letting on Government contracts; the establishment of a State bank and the Referendum. Branches of the League were formed in Fremantle, North Fremantle, Bunbury, and Guildford early in 1894, and a few months later at Southern Cross, Cue, and other mining centres. The League did not find itself in a position to take an important part in the election, and recognizing this, it contented itself with announcing its intention of helping the candidature of persons who pledged themselves to its platform; Baker, its Secretary, was the only official Labour candidate. He contested the three-cornered constituency of North

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Fremantle, but was defeated; nor could the League console itself with any success amongst supported candidates. In May 1895, Chitty Baker once more contested North Fremantle. His programme, so far as it was a Labour programme, was practically the same as at the General Election; but the question of State aid to denominational schools was introduced and Baker expressed himself as favourable to the Roman Catholic claims. This lost him the election.

In spite of these rebuffs the Labour movement grew steadily. Every accession of Labour from the eastern colonies increased the strength of the trade unions and the bias towards parliamentary action, and in September 1895 the Trades and Labour Council at Perth thought its local organization sufficiently advanced to warrant it in opening negotiations with the Australian Labour Federation for union with that body.

An alteration in the Constitution Act was made in 1896, which gave increased representation to the goldfields, and the new seats went to candidates adopting Labour views; but there was still no official Labour Party in the Western Australian Parliament, nor was it likely there would be until a radical redistribution of seats was made. This was demanded by large public meetings on the goldfields as well as at Perth and Fremantle and, as the justness of the demand was not contested by the Government, it became only a question of a short time before it would be conceded.

In view of what was coming, the Trades and Labour Council showed a large amount of energy in completing the organization of Labour, and during 1897 and 1898 unions were multiplied throughout the colony; in addition, the Australian Workers had agents at work setting up branches of their association in the principal mining towns, thus gathering into the Labour fold men not eligible for the ordinary unions.

In March 1899, whilst the lumpers' dispute was in progress at Fremantle, the first Trade Union Congress of Western Australia held its meetings at Coolgardie, presided

over by De Largie, president of the goldfields' branch of the Australian Workers' Association; representatives of branches of this association at Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, and Coolgardie were present, as well as representatives of the Trades and Labour Councils of Perth and Kalgoorlie and of a number of trade unions not included in these councils. Bath, subsequently leader of the Western Australian Labour Party, was present as a representative of the Knights of Labour. The Congress dealt with all the topics usually brought before such gatherings, as well as various questions of special interest to the mining communities and decided to form two councils in connexion with the Australian Labour Federation. One of these was to have its seat at Perth and have affiliated to it the Perth Trades and Labour Council and other Labour bodies in the metropolitan and coastal district. The second council was to unite the Labour organizations of the goldfields.

The political platform drawn up by the Congress demanded payment of members, redistribution of parliamentary seats on the basis of population and a compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It will be seen that the Congress showed considerable restraint in the construction of its platform; in a keen and practical spirit, despite a willingness to pass resolutions upon every conceivable question affecting Labour, it was wise enough to concentrate its real energies upon a few important points. The direct representation of Labour in Parliament was considered by the Congress and a decision was come to that, until payment of members was established by law, each constituency should be free to adopt a Labour candidate or to support the most suitable candidate available, subscribing to the Labour platform.

This Congress undoubtedly solidified and infused new life into the Western Australian Labour movement. The establishing of the two councils was intended to have the effect of bringing Labour politics in the west directly in touch with those of the eastern colonies, but events were

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moving in the direction of one Labour Council controlling the politics of the whole colony. During 1899, subsequent to the Coolgardie meeting, a body was constituted at Perth calling itself the Political Labour Party, branches being formed at Plympton, Beaconsfield, North Fremantle, Subiaco, and Leederville. Its platform included payment of members, adult suffrage, compulsory industrial arbitration, taxation of unimproved land values and free compulsory and secular education. The introduction of the plank referring to secular education was not a little displeasing to the Irish Roman Catholic section, which was an important element in the Labour movement, and for a considerable time this section stood aloof from the activities of the Party. Some months later, during 1900, a Political Labour League was established also for the goldfields' area.

The Parliament of Western Australia passed during 1900 a measure granting payment to members; this enabled the Labour leaders to lay their plans for securing a large measure of representation at the elections then about to be held. In August 1900 a Trade Union and Labour Congress met in Perth, the principal business considered being the steps that should be taken to secure adequate Labour representation in the State and Federal Parliaments. This Congress, for which important preparations had been made, comprised delegates from a much larger number of Labour bodies than the previous Congress, and was fairly representative of the whole Labour movement of the country. For the first time a women's union appeared—the Goldfields' Tailoresses' Union. For the Federal elections the platform of the Australian Federal Labour Conference was accepted, and for the State elections the platform of the Coolgardie Conference of the previous year, with the addition of two other planks, a Factory Act and the reversion to the mining laws of 1895. A committee was appointed to make suggestions in regard to the coming elections and the recommendation of the committee that twenty-three State constituencies should be provided with Labour candidates and that two

candidates should be found for the Federal Senate was adopted. No recommendation was made in regard to the Federal House of Representatives as the constituencies of that body had not been settled. The Congress also provided that an executive committee should be set up for each electorate. In the coastal district the committee was to consist of two delegates from each branch of the Political Labour Party with three from the Trades and Labour Council; on the goldfields the president of the Trades and Labour Council and the presidents of the unions formed the executive. The management of the election was in the hands of the various executive committees, but the rules provided that "on the goldfields each nominee shall be submitted to a plebiscite vote of all members of trade unions in each electorate, and on the coast to the members of the Political Labour Party." Some changes in these arrangements were made later on. In October 1900 there was at Coolgardie an "Electoral Labour League working in agreement with the Goldfields' Labour and Political League and Labour bodies generally," but no useful purpose would be served by tracing the evolution of the Party machinery under its various and sometimes baffling and inconsistent names. At the close of 1900 the electoral arrangements were practically complete.

The Labour movement had now reached a more advanced point than at any previous period of its history. This great advance was all the work of a comparatively few years and had been accompanied with little of industrial war or class conflict. Labour was still without direct representation in the local Parliament, but its organization was so good and the power of the unions so considerable that it had been able to force the hand of the Government in various important matters, notably in regard to compulsory arbitration and payment of members. In industrial matters Labour was also conscious of its political power. In January 1900 the employees on the Government railways made a strong protest

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against the removal of the chief mechanical engineer, and this not being successful, they struck work. Soon, however, recognizing their indefensible position, they receded from it; but a few months later they were able to compel the resignation of Piesse, the Minister of Railways, on the question of the recognition of their union.

It was still possible in 1900 for the secretary of a trade union to be convicted and imprisoned under an old Conspiracy Act, because in the course of an anti-Chinese agitation he had warned the people not to patronize certain hotels where Asiatics were employed. Nevertheless the old attitude towards the working class, which had been so marked in Western Australia until the middle of the 'eighties, had completely disappeared. The change in the relations between capital and labour after 1890 is closely comparable to what occurred in Victoria after 1851, both in its rapidity and completeness, and was due to a like cause, the discovery of gold. In Western Australia the high wages everywhere earned were responsible for some part of the change, but it must be said also that most of the men attracted to the colony by the gold discoveries came from the eastern colonies, and brought with them standards of living and ideals inconsistent with anything below the full political and social freedom which they rapidly established in their new home.

The Federal elections were arranged for March 1901, and those of the State for the following month, and between the Congress of 1900 and these elections there was a good deal of political activity throughout Western Australia, in which the Labour Party took its full share. To the Commonwealth Parliament the Labour Party returned two senators and two representatives and to the State Assembly six members. This was not a great success, being undoubtedly below the expectations of the Party and the Labour strength in the electorate, but there was no important Labour question at issue, and in Western Australia as in the other states there was a disposition

on the part of a large element of the population sympathetic with Labour, to withhold support from the political Party until events had tried the capacity of its leading men.

TASMANIA

Almost coincident with the opening of the mines in Tasmania there came a vital change in the attitude of Labour and of other classes towards Labour, which gathered strength as the mining population increased in importance. Even as late as 1872 Labour had retained some taint of convictism, but this entirely disappeared before the end of the century; a few wretched old men kept alive in some of the hospitals or asylums being all that was left to remind one of the convict era. The mere passage of time had done much to effect the change in the status of Labour, but even more potent was the new leaven of labour from the mainland, which the mineral discoveries had attracted to the island. Legislation soon showed the influence of this change. In 1886 the franchise was greatly extended; in the year following the law as to master and servant was placed on the same footing as in other parts of Australia and in various ways besides these legislation was changed to the advantage of Labour. Nevertheless, even in 1900, Tasmania was not quite abreast of the other colonies; there was no Shop Hours Act, no Factory Legislation, except certain provisions relating to persons in charge of machinery, and the representation of Labour in Parliament was yet to come.

Trade unionism came into existence in Tasmania in the year 1882, and during the next six years the movement had grown sufficiently to call for the establishment of a Trades and Labour Council in Hobart. It was under the auspices of this Council that on 4th February 1889 the sixth Intercolonial Trade Union Congress was held. The importance attached to the meeting of the Congress may be estimated from the fact that the opening ceremony was attended by the Governor, the Premier and several

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members of Parliament, the Governor delivering an address to the assembled delegates. The subjects set down for consideration had been for the most part discussed at previous congresses; amongst them were the representation of the working classes in Parliament, the organization and federation of Labour societies, early closing, the eight-hour day and conciliation and arbitration. The meetings of the Congress had undoubtedly a stimulating effect on trade unionism in Tasmania, and before 1889 closed a Bill to legalize trade unions, thus enabling them to sue and be sued, was passed in Parliament, although a similar Bill had been rejected in the previous year. In the same session an Act was passed, which, though it made strikes against public bodies unlawful, legalized acts done by combinations, if they were not illegal when done by individuals.

Tasmania took considerable interest in the London Dock Strike of August and September 1889. A meeting in support of the strike was arranged by the Trades and Labour Council at Hobart, and subscriptions were sent by several unions direct to the dock labourers. Altogether over £700 was subscribed in the island, but the bulk of this money was not given by trade unions, which were still small in numbers and poor. This weakness and poverty of the Tasmanian unions was shown very plainly in the following year when the Australian maritime strike occurred. In this Tasmania took a very unimportant part. Some of the wharf labourers at Hobart and Launceston, who were organized, went on strike, but their labour was replaced so far as it was necessary to replace it. Such dislocation of trade as occurred at the ports of the island arose less from action taken by local Labour combinations than from the stoppage of the sailings of the intercolonial boats at Melbourne and Sydney.

The silver-mines of Zeehan were developed mainly by Victorian enterprise, and the first labour employed came from Victoria. The miners brought their union with

them, which became a branch of the Amalgamated Miners' Association. It was fully recognized by the mine-owners, and in 1893, and again in 1894, the owners met representatives of the union to discuss certain proposed reductions in the rates of wages. It is noteworthy that upon both these occasions the trade union did not send local men to meet the owners, but were represented by union officials specially sent over from Victoria. In 1896 and subsequent years, when conferences met to discuss the mining laws and the amendments which it would be desirable to make in them, representatives of all classes of mining were present, but the only miners who were represented through a trade union were the Zeehan miners, none of the others being properly organized for collective action.

During 1892 some effort was made in Tasmania, as in other parts of Australia, to unite the manual labour class, so as to secure combined action in politics. Two associations were formed, one at Hobart, known as the Labour Electoral Reform League, and the other at Launceston, the Progressive Liberal League. These associations did not confine their membership to manual workers, although the larger part of their members were of that class, nor were the trade unions officially represented in their management. At the General Election of December 1893 they gave their support to certain "Progressive" candidates. In North Hobart the League supported Colonel St. Hill, and Hall, Secretary of the League, but neither of these was successful. In Launceston the Progressive candidate was Allen Macdonald, who was returned. He was not a working man, and had been before the public for ten years as a candidate at municipal and parliamentary elections, so that his appearance before the electors in 1893 was not prompted by the Launceston League, although his return was certainly to be attributed to a large Labour class vote.

The demonstrations of Labour so frequent in the other colonies were almost entirely absent from Tasmania.

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Even the eight-hour day celebration was not made the occasion for a demonstration of Labour solidarity. In 1890, and for several years thereafter, there were eight-hour day celebrations both in Hobart and in Launceston; these were not organized by the trade unions, which indeed took no part in them, but by the firms that had adopted the eight-hour day. At the Launceston procession in January 1893 about twenty bodies of workmen were thus represented, including the municipal employees and the men in the railway workshops. The demonstrations were more or less of an advertising character and, having served their turn, they ceased to be held in 1897.

The Labour League of Hobart took an active part in connexion with the agitation for employment during 1894 and 1895, and one of its leaders, a Congregational clergyman named Turnbull, was very solicitous of pleading the cause of the unemployed at the Bar of the House of Assembly, but permission to do so was refused. As a member of the League, Turnbull took an energetic part in welcoming Michael Davitt on his tour through Australia in 1895.

There was little co-operation between the Democratic forces of the island, or even those of Hobart, where the relations of the Trades and Labour Council and the Labour League were considerably lacking in cordiality. The example of what was happening in Australia, however, was not lost on the partisans of Labour in Tasmania, and towards the middle of 1896 there was a conference at Hobart to consider the possibility of "reuniting the Democratic ranks in the south." Discussion proceeded very amicably and the Conference decided to go further and amalgamate the Democratic forces of the whole island. To this the existing organizations agreed and a new body was formed, to be known as the Democratic League of Tasmania, with headquarters at Hobart. Ogilvy, who had taken a prominent part in the formation of the new body, became president; Macdonald and Urquhart, who

were members of the Assembly, and Piesse, a member of the Legislative Council, were vice-presidents ; Mulcahy, a member of the Assembly who subsequently became Minister of Lands, was treasurer, with Paton and McMahon as secretaries. This enumeration of the principal officers indicates that the new body was not a Labour organization, although its members were drawn largely from the manual labour class. The Democratic League put forward a platform which included a tax on unimproved land values, abolition of income tax and in place thereof the imposition of a tax on the capital value of houses worth £120 or over, extension of the franchise, reform of the Legislative Council, payment of members, an eight-hour day and the regulation of shops and factories. At the General Election of 1897 the League nominated as candidates Ronald Smith, a journalist, and Macdonald for Launceston, and Paton, a genuine working man, for Hobart. Of these Smith alone was returned. The non-success of its first effort did not deter the League from endeavouring to secure the return of candidates favourable to its views at the election of members for the Australian Federal Convention, but it did not feel strong enough to stand alone, and in conjunction with the Australian Natives' Association, the Hobart Trades and Labour Council, and some other societies, it issued a list of the candidates whom it recommended to the electors. The names of these were Fysh, Braddon, Bird, Ogilvy, Dobson, Henry, Piesse, Paton, Urquhart and Smith. Some of the ten were quite undemocratic in their views, being strongly opposed to the League's general programme, and undoubtedly the four last-named were the candidates really favoured by the League ; of these Paton was the only Labour candidate. None of the four was elected.

The Democratic League ceased to exist before the close of the period and its demise passed unchronicled. In December 1900 there was a by-election for Hobart at which a working man named Pemberton was a Labour candidate. There was, however, no Labour organization

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to support him and he was responsible for his own programme. Pemberton obtained only 434 votes as against 1500 cast for the successful candidate, but Hobart was a city not leaning towards Labour and one-fifth of the electorate was probably the strength of the purely Labour vote.

IX

WHITE AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA has no native difficulty of its own ; its aborigines are few, scattered, and dying out. Its troubles in the matter of coloured population arise from its proximity to India and China. It occupies a position essentially different from any other part of the British Empire. It stands out of the great trade routes of the world, remote from Europe, from which it is removed by thirty days' steaming. On the other hand, it is close to south-eastern Asia, being seven days from India and ten from China ; along its northern coasts lie the great Indian archipelagos, so close indeed that, with unrestricted immigration, Australia might easily find itself with a large Asiatic population absolutely out of sympathy with its ideals, alien in manners and religion, in sympathy and aspirations, with whom intermarriage would be impossible or, if possible, most harmful—a population to be defended in case of aggression and untrustworthy for purposes of defence. From the point of view of the average Australian this ethnical objection to the coloured races stands out most prominently. In all the large cities there are communities of non-British Europeans who are greatly objected to on economic grounds, but whose presence is tolerated because they belong to the races with whom Australians may intermarry, and who may thus become absorbed in the general population. With the coloured races it is different. Australians have no wish to see reproduced in their country the conditions prevailing in

the Southern States of America, or in those South American countries where mixed races predominate. They claim to hold their territory as trustees for the British people in the first instance and then for the white races generally, and are genuinely astonished to find so little sympathy with their ideals displayed by the governing classes of England.

With the Australian workman the ethnical objection counts, but his primary objection is less abstract. At anti-Chinese meetings, which at one time were not infrequent in the large towns of Australia, the speakers' indictment of the yellow man almost invariably began with a reference to his immorality. The Chinese, they said, are given over to gambling, opium smoking, and low and disgusting vices, and on that account are no fit objects for citizenship in the Australian paradise or the comradeship of Australian workers. Their vices are indeed so appalling that it would seem almost unnecessary for the speakers to travel further with their indictment, but they always do travel further, when it is discovered that the root objection to the Chinese is less to his alleged vices than to his economic virtues. The Chinese virtues are reliability, sobriety, economy, adaptability, quickness to learn, imitativeness, and diligence; his working efficiency, however, is below that of the European, but his wages are still lower. During the last years of this period the average wage of a Chinese in a skilled trade was about 3s. 4d. a day as compared with 9s. usually paid to Europeans in like employments and this disparity of wage more than compensated for the superior celerity and efficiency of the European.

The various census returns show that in 1891 the Chinese, who numbered about one-fiftieth of the adult male population, provided one-fifth or more of the workers in at least sixteen trades. As storekeepers, hawkers, launderers, market-gardeners, cooks and cabinetmakers the Chinese come into competition with Europeans, and are their successful rivals. So far the great industries of the country,

agriculture, grazing, and mining, remain untouched by the Chinese invasion, but the agitation for exclusion is based less on what has actually happened than on what is considered might very readily happen under conditions of the open door.

The Australian worker cries out that the Chinese is a producer and not a consumer. He insists that the price of labour is determined by the cost of its maintenance or production and that the European with his need for varied food, superior clothing, sanitary surroundings, comfortable lodging, and amusements, with like conditions for his wife and family, requires much larger wages than does the Chinese worker and in competition must go to the wall. It is not, as we know, to the alleged vices of the Chinese that objection is taken; if to his habits of industry, patience, and skill there were added a capacity for consuming or using articles which the European labourer produces, the Chinese might not, perhaps, be so cordially disliked.

If the continent of Australia were wholly in the temperate zone there would doubtless have been no Chinese question, as there is none really in New Zealand. As it is, all discussion of admission or exclusion of the Chinese has ranged round the problem of climate. A large part of the continent, probably one-fourth of its whole area, has an average winter temperature in excess of 65.5° Fahr., and a summer temperature above 87° ; within this region is included much fertile land, unoccupied and likely to remain unoccupied by Europeans. The partisans of the white labour policy claim that it has not been established that this country, which embraces the Northern Territory, tropical Queensland, and the Kimberley District of Western Australia, cannot be efficiently colonized by Europeans, especially if they changed their habits to suit the climatic conditions. The experience of other countries does not necessarily demonstrate that the white man cannot work in the Australian tropics. What is true of Africa and America is not necessarily true of Australia, where it is

found that occupation vastly improves the coast lands from the point of view of health, malarial fever retreating before the face of systematic cultivation. It is argued that where the Chinese or Japanese can work there also the European can work. Taken as a whole, Japan is a cold country as compared to Australia. At Hakodate the temperature of the coldest months averages 27.5° Fahr., and at Tokio 36.0° . Similarly at Shanghai in China, in the centre of the coast, the average of the coldest month is 25.7° , and at Peking 26.0° . In Sydney the average temperature of the coldest months is 52.3° , in Adelaide 51.7° , in Melbourne 49.2° , and in Brisbane the temperature of the months of June, July, and August averages 60° . When the Kanakas were excluded from the canefields the cry was raised that the sugar industry of Queensland would be ruined, as Europeans could not work in the canefields of the tropics as the coloured man could with impunity. That Kanakas could work with impunity in the canefields is an assumption contrary to fact, for the death-rate amongst them was 24 per thousand, which would be high for adults in the prime of life in any part of the world and is extraordinary for Australia. The death-rate for adult Europeans in tropical Queensland is 14 per thousand, and for persons of the same ages as the Kanakas, 11 per thousand; even this rate would be lower if the Europeans would adapt their habits to suit the climatic conditions. A large proportion of them persist in following in the tropics dietetic customs acquired in colder climates, and it is alcohol, not malaria, that is the enemy. As in the northern parts of Queensland, so in the Northern Territory. When dietetic errors are avoided, the country is found to be not unhealthy and the death-rate is not high. Even under present conditions the death-rate of European males as ascertained from the experience of two decades is 19 per thousand, which is not greater than that of several European countries, and few deaths are the result of what are ordinarily termed tropical diseases. But all this, in the opinion of those who favour

coloured labour, is mere quibbling, as whatever may be the theoretical possibilities of white colonization, tropical Australia remains untenanted.

In their desire to keep Australia white, the working classes have had little sympathy from their employers, but their manifest resolve has had its due effect on persons engaged in politics, who all clearly recognize that no political party could hope to maintain itself in power if it leaned to a policy favourable to the coloured races. But while on this account there is no organized party in Australia in favour of the introduction or even the tolerance of coloured labour, there is a large body of opinion in favour of its employment for the expansion of certain industries, especially of tropical agriculture. The more extreme section demands freedom of entry for any person who desires to settle in the country and, regardless of the attitude of the Labour Party, full protection for him in any occupation to which he may choose to turn. The more moderate party asks for a systematic effort of the Government to people the country with whites and, failing this, the employment of coloured labour in defined areas and under specific restrictions.

The first section is so small numerically, and its opinion so unpopular, that further consideration of it may be neglected; the more numerous section, while conceding that the indiscriminate admission of coloured labour would be a mistake, claims that though it may be true that the white man is able to work in the tropical parts of Australia, he does not choose to do so, and it is impossible to believe that he would work there for any prolonged period, except under the stimulus of unusual force, such as that of a rich gold discovery, and then only if he were his own master. In these circumstances tropical Australia must remain unpeopled unless coloured labour is introduced, and an unpeopled tropic would be a source of weakness and an invitation to aggression. To lessen the objection of the working classes to this labour, those who favour it suggest that its use should be confined to specified

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areas and occupations, and that it should be debarred from travelling south of the 24th parallel or other defined line.

The leaders of the working classes have steadily opposed this specious compromise, maintaining that any scheme for keeping the coloured labourers to certain districts of Australia would be impracticable, and that, even if practicable, it would be against the principles of a free Australia that certain persons should be admitted to the country, but denied privileges accorded to all others. In any case they declare that it is the fixed policy of the Labour Party to maintain a white Australia, and if this involves the keeping of certain parts of the country empty, because Europeans will not colonize them, it is desirable they should remain empty rather than be peopled by coloured races.

The Australian Parliaments have always regarded immigration and the treatment of aliens as matters of purely local concern, taking no account of the susceptibilities of the Governments whose nationals might be affected by discrimination or restriction. In framing laws dealing with coloured immigrants, it was not, except in the case of Western Australia, until the control of immigration passed to the Commonwealth that the education test was adopted, so that the nationals proposed to be excluded should not be directly named. This method of excluding coloured persons, for the test is not applied to Europeans, was adopted on the urgent representation of Joseph Chamberlain, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, in order not to wound the susceptibilities of Japan and China, and of the Indian subjects of the Empire. But whether their susceptibilities are wounded or not, the formula of an educational test deceives nobody and does little to relieve the difficulty of England's position. On the one hand are her treaties with the Asiatic Powers and the necessity of giving to their subjects the same rights in British territories as she requires for her own in China and Japan, and, what is not less important, the obligations she

is under towards her Indian subjects, that they shall have equality of treatment in every part of the Empire ; on the other hand there is the immovable attitude of the Australian people. To the various Ministers who have presided over the Colonial Office this attitude has always seemed unreasonable and unfair ; for while counting on the protection of England in every circumstance, Australia refuses to tolerate interference in her legislation against coloured labour, and makes that legislation so provocative that it may at any time involve the country in a serious dispute with powerful nations whose good-will it is most important should be retained.

The remonstrances which the Government in London have addressed to Australia have been received with courtesy, but always with a *non-possumus*, no matter what Government was in power, for on the question of coloured labour all Australian Governments have been of one mind. Remonstrances have been received in due course by the Imperial Government from the nations affected and from the Government of India and been in turn transmitted to the Australian Governments. These remonstrances were not made public except in a general way and the people of Australia came to believe that their legislation, though unpalatable, was accepted by the Governments and peoples concerned ; but they also recognized that they would have no cause of complaint if like treatment were meted out to them by India, China, and Japan. This naïve suggestion of reciprocal restrictions as a solution of international difficulties is eminently Australian ; but well-informed opinion in Australia, as well as in England, deprecates the harsh attitude adopted towards the coloured races and the lack of consideration shown to England, foreseeing grave trouble for Australia if this attitude is persisted in. A notable article on the subject appeared in the *London Times* on 2nd January 1908, of which the following is an extract :

Though we have parted almost completely with Imperial control over the self-governing Colonies, chiefly for want of

any consistent Colonial policy or any statesmen to work it, we are not altogether without the means of safeguarding our own interests or of insisting upon reasonable compromises. The Colonies that most loudly proclaim their determination to be white countries depend absolutely upon the protection of the Mother Country for their power to remain white. Without that protection how long could Australia, for example, exclude the Japanese? Not for six months after the Japanese made up their minds that settling grounds in Australia were worth an expedition. Since we are responsible for any high-handed action that Australia may take, and since we are expected to shield Australia from the natural consequences, we have the right to do something more than utter feeble verbal protests.

The accuracy of this statement of the case against Australia cannot be denied, but there are certain considerations which diminish its force. The unoccupied parts of Australia from Shark's Bay to Cape York are not inviting settling grounds for any people; what Australia has to fear is peaceful penetration, not an armed expedition; and although Australia, in deciding upon a course for itself in regard to India, China, and Japan, has shown scant consideration for the treaty obligations of England and her Imperial responsibilities, any attempt on the part of the Imperial Government to go beyond a verbal protest would be useless as regards the end in view and fatal to the cordial relations of England and Australia.

As a loosely united group, before Federation, the colonies were determined on the policy of a white Australia without being in a position to protect themselves in case their action provoked the active resentment of the Asiatic Powers, and thus deserved the gibe that while loudly proclaiming their intention to be white countries they were depending absolutely on others for their power to remain so. The necessity of being armed arose out of the adoption of the white Australia policy and that necessity was the prime factor in bringing about Federation. The Commonwealth is taking and will take measures to be in a position to defend its own and the reproach of being

willing to provoke and unable to resist is thus no longer true. This does not, however, remove the difference between authoritative English opinion and the general sentiment of the Australian people. This difference is fundamental. While the Imperial necessities and England's world-power require a reasonable compromise between Australia's exclusion and the right of free entry demanded by India, China, and Japan, the Australian people have become convinced that the protection and development of their race require a policy of absolute exclusion of all coloured races, and no compromise or deviation from such policy can be entertained. It has been assumed in official circles in England that Australia's policy has been based, to no inconsiderable extent, on prejudice and unreasoning hostility and with patience and forbearance that policy may undergo modification. Unfortunately for Australia's reputation, the agitation against the coloured races has been accompanied by some cruelty and much vulgar vituperation of the great Asiatic peoples, which has given some grounds for English opinion; but behind the agitation are the convictions of the great mass of the people. Australians are little given to sentimentality, yet there is a great deal of sentiment in their attitude in this matter. They conceive that in holding their territory against the Asiatic peoples they have a nobler ideal of their Imperial responsibilities and a truer sense of ultimate values than those who claim, in the interests of the world policy of the Empire, the free or restricted admission of the Asiatic to Australia.

X

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

THE commission given to Phillip fixed the western boundary of New South Wales at the 135° of east longitude and placed all the country to the eastward as well as the adjacent islands under his Governorship. In 1825 Van Diemen's Land was erected into a separate colony owing to the inconvenience of governing it from Sydney. In 1826 a small settlement was made at King George's Sound with the object of frustrating the suspected designs of the French on the western part of the continent, and in the following year the territory of New South Wales was extended to the 115th meridian, thus becoming co-extensive with the whole continent. It did not retain these dimensions very long. In 1829 Western Australia was cut off and in 1834 South Australia; these colonies were separated completely from New South Wales and were to be colonized from England, and, in the case of South Australia especially, were to be governed on entirely different lines from New South Wales. The separation of the Port Phillip District was quite a different matter. Although the small original settlement of the district was made from Tasmania, the colony was really settled as part of New South Wales and its eventual separation in 1851, as the Colony of Victoria, was due to difficulties in administering the territory from Sydney. Representative government was found to be practically impossible and the New South Wales Government was brought to

acquiesce, though with reluctance, in the demand of Port Phillip for a separate constitution.

The arguments employed in the case of Port Phillip produced so great an impression on the Colonial Office, that it provided at the same time for the further dismemberment of New South Wales, by the separation of its northern portions when certain conditions should arise. It was not long before they did so and in 1859 the colony of Queensland was established. The six colonies of Australia thus came into being and it seemed likely that the process of disintegration would be carried still further. In 1863 the Duke of Newcastle stated in the House of Lords that "applications for the formation of new colonies, out of the existing colonies, came so frequently that if it were possible to accomplish the wishes of all the people of New South Wales, Sydney, and a very limited district round it, would be the only surviving portions of the colony." Until late in the nineteenth century a demand for separation was the favourite remedy for the real or imagined grievances of settlers in outlying districts; the inhabitants of Western Victoria, the Riverine settlers in New South Wales, those of the Richmond and Clarence rivers in the same colony, Northern and Central Queensland, and lastly, the gold-diggers of Western Australia, each in turn demanded the setting up of new colonies on their behalf.

As population spread and the means of communication improved, the real need of forming new colonies diminished. public opinion on the subject underwent a considerable change and this change was not confined to Australia. The readiness of English statesmen to divide up Australia which showed itself so clearly in the 'fifties of the last century, was partly due to the idea that it would be easier to control and guide small communities than large and powerful ones, and in the case of Queensland the willingness to grant complete separation was not unconnected with the expectation of obtaining another convict settlement. Nevertheless, the ultimate necessity for some form

of Federation of the Australian colonies was recognized by the Colonial Office, even while the process of subdivision was being carried out.

The first clear enunciation on the subject of the union of the colonies was made by Sir Charles Fitzroy, Governor of New South Wales, who, in a despatch sent to England in September 1846, pointed to the need of some definite control over intercolonial Legislation. He suggested the appointment of some superior functionary, to whom all measures adopted by the local Legislatures, affecting the general interests of the Mother Country, the colonies themselves, or their intercolonial trade, should be submitted by the local Governors before their own consent was given to them. As Fitzroy had been hardly a month in the country when his despatch was penned, it is natural to assume that it was the work of his official advisers, especially of Deas-Thompson, who entertained strong views on the subject. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that Fitzroy's proposal contained the idea of a political Federation and it is improbable that the appointment of a superior functionary was seriously considered by the Colonial Office. That Office was at the time wrestling with the problem of conferring constitutions on the four principal colonies of Australia and the Secretary of State, Earl Grey, had other and larger ideas. These he embodied in a despatch to the local Governors, which, after outlining his proposals for the better government of the separate colonies, made a suggestion for the setting up of a General Assembly to deal with matters of common Australian interest. Earl Grey's proposal contained the suggestion that indirect election of representatives, through the District Councils, should be substituted for the direct election of the Legislature; this was so little relished by the colonists that they hastened to express their "apprehension and dismay," and in this larger issue the question of setting up a General Assembly was almost lost sight of. Grey had adopted the idea as to District Councils from Gipps' proposal for electing the *first* representatives to the Victorian Legislature. He was

very disingenuous in his public utterances in dealing with the dislike evinced by Australians for his scheme, and tried to make it appear that their objection was to an alteration in the single Chamber system and indeed to any change in the New South Wales Government scheme. In his despatches, however, he was more candid and promised, in 1849, that the Bill should carry out the wishes of the colonists.

In the meantime the question of the new constitutions was referred to the Committee of the Privy Council on Trade and Plantations, a Bill founded on the suggestions of the committee being laid before Parliament and passed in August 1850. The committee had recommended the creation of a Federal authority, the General Assembly of Australia, which might be convened by the Governor of New South Wales, who should also be Governor-General of Australia. The Assembly was to consist of from twenty to thirty delegates elected by the Legislatures of the colonies, each sending two, with an additional member for each fifteen thousand of the population; it was to have authority to deal with certain matters affecting all the colonies, such as postal arrangements, customs, lighthouses, etc., and also with the Crown lands. This latter was a very important concession as, at the time, the proceeds of the sale and lease of lands were regulated by Imperial enactment. In the House of Lords the provisions of the Bill in regard to Federation were strongly opposed by Lord Stanley, with the result that they were withdrawn by the Government. Subsequently in the Commons, Scott, who was acting at the time as Agent for New South Wales, took great exception to the changes made by the Lords, principally because the Bill no longer gave the colonists full control over their lands, but not much attention was paid to his protests and the Bill passed in its mutilated form.

The attitude of Scott in this matter was undoubtedly inspired by the Government of New South Wales. In that colony there was a decided willingness to accept a

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Federal body, probably because it was believed that in such an assembly the oldest, richest, and most populous colony would command a predominating influence. There was no such eagerness in the other colonies, but the only one that showed marked antipathy to the Federal Scheme was South Australia, which, even before the Bill had been introduced, had taken steps to make its opinions known to the English Government. The Government of the Province feared the dominating influence of New South Wales, which was more than anxious that its cherished doctrine of a high minimum price for land should not be set aside in the interests of the "hungry squatters of New South Wales who were clamouring for land at 5s. an acre"; but over and above this South Australia prided itself on its exclusiveness and did not wish for union with the other colonies.

The Constitution Act of 1850 met with great opposition in New South Wales, but that opposition was not concerned with the question of Federation. In the end, as we have seen, the local Legislatures were allowed to draft their own constitutions and these were adopted by the Colonial Office; in the circumstances the constitutions drawn up by the local Legislatures contained no reference to a Federal Assembly. In New South Wales alone was any desire shown for Federation. There the Select Committee, appointed in 1853 to prepare a constitution for the colony, reported that the establishment of a General Assembly for the Australian colonies had become indispensable, and expressed the hope that the English Government would see the expediency of introducing at once, into the Imperial Parliament, a Bill for that express object. The English Government did not act on this suggestion and in October 1855 Denison transmitted to the Legislative Council of New South Wales, together with the Constitution Act, a message from the Home Government stating that "the question of introducing clauses to establish a Federal Union of the Australian colonies for purposes of common interest had been seriously weighed

by Her Majesty's Government, but they had concluded that it was not a proper opportunity for such an enactment, though they would give the fullest consideration to any propositions on the subject emanating from the colonial Legislatures." Wentworth, who with Deas-Thompson had been entrusted with the task of watching the progress of the Constitution Act through the English Parliament, had formed in England a General Association for the Australian colonies. This body, which consisted of colonists and Englishmen interested in Australia, urged Federation warmly and in March 1857 presented a memorial to Labouchère, Secretary of State for the Colonies, pointing out the need for a measure to enable two or more of the colonies to act together on certain questions, Wentworth submitting the draft of a Bill for the purpose. Labouchère would not take the responsibility of introducing it, but he submitted the matter to the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, and asked for their opinions. In August 1857 Deas-Thompson moved in the New South Wales Council for the appointment of a Select Committee on Australian Federation, and this body reported in favour of a meeting of delegates from the Legislatures of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to devise plans for a General Assembly. Resolutions founded on this report were moved by Deas-Thompson and carried unanimously by the Council. A month later a conference on the subject was held by the Council and the Assembly, but the matter was stopped by the prorogation of Parliament. In Victoria, Gavan Duffy was more fortunate. In 1857 he succeeded in getting the Legislative Assembly to appoint a committee to consider the question of Federation, and, although the members of the committee showed no great enthusiasm, their report, which was drawn up by Duffy, is a very interesting document. The recommendations of the committee were adopted by both Houses of the Victorian Parliament and forwarded to the Governments of the neighbouring States. In South Australia the Duffy proposals found a Parlia-

ment distinctly hostile; and later, when a Parliament was set up in Queensland, it was also antagonistic. Having escaped the domination of Sydney, the Queensland settlers were not desirous of again taking upon themselves what they were pleased to call the Southern yoke. In Sydney, John Dunmore Lang, an ardent Federalist, obtained a Select Committee on Federation, but he was an ardent Republican also and his proposals were derisively received by the New South Wales Parliament. Lang's committee did not report, as progress was stopped by the prorogation of Parliament, but in any case neither the committee nor its work was taken seriously. There was a large body of opinion in New South Wales in favour of a "general union" of the Australian colonies, but behind it there was no enthusiasm and the movement fell dead under the bitter assaults of Cowper and Martin and other prominent political leaders.

In Victoria the Federal idea still lived. Not content with the reception accorded to his proposals five years previously, Gavan Duffy obtained another parliamentary committee in 1862. Its report struck a new note; Federal union was desired, it declared, "on account of the condition of the world, the danger of war, which, to be successfully met, must be met by united action." The danger of war did not appear so imminent as to cause the colonies to rush into union, but the inconvenience, both public and private, caused by setting up six separate Governments, without a union for common purposes under a central authority, became more apparent with their progress and the development of responsible government. To lessen this the expedient of holding conferences to discuss questions of common interest was frequently resorted to. The colonies agreeing to take part sent to these conferences two or more Cabinet Ministers, one of whom was usually the Premier. The proceedings of these conferences are referred to in their proper place. We are concerned here only with their contribution to the accomplishment of Federation. The conference which sat in Melbourne in

March 1867 passed resolutions in favour of a Federal Council, to come into being when two or more colonies obtained the requisite parliamentary authority to their being represented therein. A Bill authorizing the representation of the colony in a Federal Council was passed by the New South Wales Parliament and assented to by the Governor on 9th October 1867, but no other colony took the necessary step. In 1870 the proposal for the establishing of a Federal Council was referred to a Select Committee of the Victorian Parliament. This committee reported that a permissive Act must first be passed by the Imperial Parliament, and, influenced by Gavan Duffy, suggested that it would be desirable that the colonies be given the right of making commercial treaties with Foreign Powers and that their neutrality should be secured in time of war. Naturally the permissive Act was not passed by the Imperial Parliament, nor was any other colony found willing to back up the suggestion made by Victoria.

As early as 1864 France had established a penal colony in New Caledonia, which appeared to threaten Australian interests in the Pacific and it seemed for a time that external pressure would probably accomplish what internal jealousies had so far prevented. Early in the 'seventies American activities in Samoa became conspicuous, and Germany had made an appearance in the South Seas. At the urgent request of Australia the Fiji Islands were annexed by the Imperial Government in 1874, and in 1878 that Government came to an agreement with France in regard to the New Hebrides. In 1883 the question of the annexation of New Guinea became acute and the eastern portion of the island was annexed by Thomas McIlwraith on behalf of the British Crown. In disavowing McIlwraith's action, Lord Carnarvon reminded the colonies that had they been ready "to give trial and effect to the principle of joint action among the different members of the Empire in such cases," New Guinea as well as the New Hebrides might have been gained in 1876.

There had been one of the periodic intercolonial conferences in 1880, which passed a resolution in favour of a Federal Council to deal with intercolonial questions, but as only New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia were represented, further steps were deferred until the following year. The conference met again in Sydney in 1881, and Parkes, who presided, read a memorandum he had prepared on the subject of a Bill to establish a Federal Council of Australia, but there was no real agreement amongst the delegates and so the matter was not proceeded with. It is worth noting that on this occasion New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania were favourable to the proposal, while Victoria and Queensland were against it, as also was New Zealand. The New Guinea affair, to which reference has been made above, gave to the question of the establishment of some sort of Federation an aspect of urgency which it did not wear before, and in 1883 the largest and most important conference yet held in Australia met in Sydney, having been convened at the instance of James Service, then Premier of Victoria. To this conference the six Australian colonies, as well as New Zealand and Fiji, sent delegates; and Alexander Stuart, who had recently displaced Parkes from the Premiership of New South Wales, was elected President.

The conference decided in favour of the maintenance of a Monroe doctrine for Australasia, protested against the introduction of convict labour to the French possessions in New Caledonia, demanded the annexation of New Guinea and the securing of control over the New Hebrides. It agreed to the promotion of a Bill for the establishment of a Federal Council, such Council being given authority to deal with marine defences, the influx of Chinese, the regulation of quarantine and such other matters of Australasian interest as might be referred to it by Her Majesty or by any of the Australasian Legislatures.

During 1884 the colonies of Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji requested the Imperial Government to pass an Act authorizing the

formation of a Federal Council to which any colony that felt inclined could send delegates. In the following year the Federal Council of Australasia Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament and received the Queen's assent. That New South Wales did not join the other colonies in establishing this Council was largely due to the opposition of Parkes. He had been absent from Australia during the sittings of the Conference in 1883 and when he returned it was found that he had entirely altered his views in regard to the Council. In 1881 he had declared "that the time had not come for the construction of a Federal constitution with an Australian Federal Parliament," but "the time is come when a number of matters of much concern to all the colonies might be dealt with more effectively by some Federal authority than by the colonies separately," and "that an organization which would lead men to think in the direction of Federation and accustom the public mind to Federal ideas, would be the best preparation for the foundation of Federal Government." In 1884 Parkes declared that Federation required no preliminary preparation—it must come at a blow, and that "the Federal Council would be a rickety body" and New South Wales should avoid "joining in making a spectacle before the world which would cover us with ridicule." Parkes remained to the end an opponent of the Federal Council, ridiculing it whenever opportunity offered; nevertheless it is doubtful whether the Council would have been set up had it not been for his advocacy of it while he was in power.

The first meeting of the Federal Council was held at Hobart in January 1886, the colonies represented being Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji. South Australia sent representatives to a subsequent meeting, but withdrew shortly afterwards. The Council, which never showed any hostility to the larger Federal movement, had eight meetings, at which many matters of intercolonial interest were discussed, the last having been held in Melbourne early in 1899. Some typical

instances of its activity are the Act regulating the *bêche de mer* and pearl fisheries in Australian waters beyond the territorial limits of Queensland ; and resolutions in favour of uniform company, banking, and quarantine legislation and of the appointment of a representative of the Australian Bench on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Effect was given to this last resolution by the appointment of Sir Samuel Way, Chief-Justice of South Australia.

The abstention of New South Wales from the Federal Council deprived that body of any hope of success. During its short existence the Council had little or no influence ; it was a purely deliberative body, possessing no control of funds or other means to put its legislation into force and those zealous in the cause of Federation saw very clearly that they would have to look elsewhere for the realization of their hopes.

Major-General Sir J. Bevan Edwards arrived in Australia to inquire into the defences of the country early in 1889, and spent some months in Sydney, where Parkes, who was again Premier, had several interviews with him. There is no record of what took place at these interviews, but there can be little doubt that they served to re-arouse Parkes' interest in the cause of Federation. It was a time of political lull, and Parkes also welcomed an opportunity of dropping the trivialities of local politics and taking up a question which appealed so forcibly to his wide political sympathies. On 9th July 1889, which was some three months before General Edwards had concluded his investigations, Parkes wrote to Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, suggesting that the time had come "for a Federal Parliament, and executive with complete authority, on the lines of the Dominion of Canada." Gillies was far from responsive and replied that the scheme was chimerical, the Federal Council served its purpose well enough and New South Wales should join that Council. But Parkes held to the views he had expressed in 1884 and opposed his colony's joining the Federal Council. On 9th October 1889, General Edwards' Report

on Australian Defences was published. The main point of this Report was that until the Australian colonies entered into effective Federal union adequate defence was impossible. Parkes at once sent a circular telegram to the different Premiers inviting them to consider the Report. To this Gillies replied for all, maintaining his former attitude, which was in effect that the Federal Council already provided all that was required to carry out General Edwards' recommendations in regard to the defence of the colonies. Parkes now went to Brisbane and saw the Premier of Queensland and the leader of the Opposition of that colony; on his return journey to Sydney he stopped at Tenterfield and made his grand pronunciamiento, calling on the Australian people to support him in his efforts to secure the Federation of the colonies. On his arrival in Sydney he reopened communication with the Premiers and, a letter to Gillies having been ignored, sent another circular despatch, in which he recommended that the various Parliaments should pass a resolution to the effect that a Convention should be held: (1) To prepare a Bill for a Federation Scheme to include the appointment of a Governor-General, the creation of a Privy Council and a Judicial Court of Appeal, and the establishment of a Federal Senate and House of Commons; (2) to consider the functions and powers of such a body; (3) to consider the relations of such Federal powers and the Provincial bodies; and (4) to prepare an Address.

This appeal could not be ignored. In the first place, Parkes was capable of appealing to the people of the other colonies over the heads of the politicians; in the second, in several of the colonies the Premiers could not count on their Cabinets to follow them in any course obstructive to Federation. After consulting with the other Premiers, Gillies made the suggestion that the matter should be discussed by the Federal Council in colloquy, with representatives from New South Wales, the idea still being that the older colony should be forced into the Federal Council.

The situation developed under the influence of Lord Carrington, the Governor of New South Wales, whose correspondence with the Colonial Office and with the other colonial Governors on the subject of the Parkes scheme at this time has been preserved. Through Carrington's influence with Loch, the Governor of Victoria, Gillies was persuaded to write to Parkes in more friendly terms and on 22nd November he admitted that "nothing short of a fully organized Federal Government could answer the high purpose of a Federal Australia." In order to avoid the necessity of humiliating New South Wales, the fiction was adopted that the New South Wales representatives should meet the other members of the Federal Council, as representatives of their colonies, in Melbourne, February 1890.

At this point it is interesting to turn to the political conditions in New South Wales, the development of which in one direction or another meant so much to the Federal idea.

At the beginning of 1890, Sir Henry Parkes, who had regained office on the Free Trade platform in 1887, was clearly losing ground to the Protectionists. A general election, held early in 1889, had returned him to power with a majority of only two. This insecurity of Parkes' parliamentary position meant that the fate of the Federal idea, in the mother state, depended on its reception by the parties at present divided on the fiscal issue. That the new issue would cut across the old lines of party division became evident when Barton, who had been Attorney-General in the Dibbs Protectionist Ministry, congratulated Parkes on his Tenterfield utterance and publicly approved the Federal cause at a meeting of the Australian Natives' Association in the Sydney Town Hall early in November. In this Barton was supported by J. P. Garvan and Joseph Abbott, both leading Protectionists; but the majority of the Party, loyal to Dibbs, refused to prejudice the fiscal issue with the new political idea and many of them made early declarations of a downright opposition to Federalism.

On the other side there were also strong declarations adverse to the new doctrine, and the speech of Parkes Treasurer, McMillan, at Waverley, may be quoted as typical of a large section of Free Trade opinion. "Federation," he said, "would be intolerable except upon the basis of Free Trade with the whole world." The crucial act of the Free Traders occurred on 31st January 1890—a week before the Melbourne Conference was to meet. On this day, at the annual meeting of the Liberal and Free Trade Association, Dr. Garran, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, declared that union was more important than any fiscal system, but Neild, who represented a city constituency, moved that any Federal scheme must first be cleared of any prejudice to the Free Trade cause.

These cross currents of opinion did not prejudice the holding of the preliminary conference, but a reference to them is necessary in order to show that opposition to Federation did not arise from the defects of the Bill of 1891, or those of its successor of 1898, but would have been perhaps equally strong to any Bill that could have been produced. The Government of New South Wales was represented by Parkes and his Treasurer, McMillan; Victoria by Gillies, Premier, and Deakin, Colonial Secretary; and Tasmania by Bird, Treasurer, and Clark, Attorney-General. Queensland sent McCrossan, Treasurer, and Griffith, leader of the Opposition; South Australia, Cockburn, Premier, and Playford, leader of the Opposition; Western Australia, Lee-Steere, the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and New Zealand, Russell, Colonial Secretary, and Hall, a former Premier. There were thus thirteen delegates, and Gillies was elected president. Seven meetings were held, the question of Federation being discussed at considerable length; and in the end the conference adopted an Address to the Queen, expressing its loyalty and attachment and submitting certain resolutions which affirmed the desirability of an early union, under the Crown, of the Australian colonies, on principles just to all. It suggested that the remoter

Australasian colonies should be entitled to admission upon terms to be afterwards agreed upon, and recommended that steps should be taken for the appointment of delegates to a National Australasian Convention, to consider and report upon an adequate scheme for a Federal constitution.

In accordance with the terms of that resolution, delegates were appointed by the Australasian Parliaments, and on 2nd March 1891 the National Australasian Convention commenced its sittings in the Legislative Assembly Chambers, Sydney. There were forty-five members of the Convention altogether, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia (which had only recently been placed in possession of the privilege of responsible government) each sending seven delegates, and New Zealand three. Parkes was elected president of the Convention and Samuel Griffith, Premier of Queensland, vice-president.

A series of resolutions was moved by the president, setting forth certain principles necessary to establish and secure an enduring foundation for the structure of a Federal Government and approving of the framing of a Federal constitution ; after discussion and amendment the resolutions were finally adopted, affirming the following principles :

1. The powers and rights of existing colonies to remain intact, except as regards such powers as it may be necessary to hand over to the Federal Government.
2. No alteration to be made in State boundaries without the consent of the Legislatures of such States as well as of the Federal Parliament.
3. Trade between the Federated colonies to be absolutely free.
4. Power to impose customs and excise duties to rest with the Federal Government and Parliament.
5. Military and naval defence forces to be under one command.
6. The Federal constitution to make provision to enable each State to make amendments in its constitution if necessary for the purposes of Federation.

Further resolutions approved of the framing of a Federal constitution which should establish a Senate and a House of Representatives—the latter to possess the sole power of originating Money Bills; also a Federal supreme court of appeal and an executive consisting of a Governor-General with such persons as might be appointed his advisers.

The principles on which Federation should be based having thus been settled, the Convention appointed three committees to work out the details of a complete scheme of Federal union. The business of these committees was :

- (a) To consider constitutional machinery.
- (b) To consider finance, taxation, and trade regulations.
- (c) To consider the judiciary.

The committees in charge of the two latter departments were instructed to report to the constitutional committee, which was to prepare and submit a Bill for a Federal constitution. On 31st March Griffith presented the report of the constitutional committee with the draft Bill. Three points in the Bill are worthy of attention in view of subsequent controversies, namely, the powers of the Senate in regard to Money Bills; the relations of the responsible Ministry to Parliament; and the tariff and financial arrangements between the States and the Commonwealth.

The Senate was given equal power with the House of Representatives over all legislation except appropriation and taxation Bills. These it was provided must originate in the House of Representatives, but could be rejected though they could not be amended by the Senate. No Bill could be amended so as to increase any charge or burden on the people, but, as in South Australia, the Second Chamber was given the power to “suggest” amendments and for that purpose might return a Bill to the Representatives with a message.

The Bill provided for the constitution of a Federal executive council, composed of Ministers who should hold office during the Governor’s pleasure. A Minister

might sit in either House of Parliament, but there was no absolute provision that he should be in Parliament. This was made an objection to the Bill, but though it did not expressly adopt the principle of responsible government, it indicated, so to speak, that the practice would be followed; indeed it would have been impossible to work the constitution without responsible government.

As regards finance, the Commonwealth was given exclusive power to impose duties by customs and excise, and all such duties were required to be uniform. Until these uniform duties were imposed, State tariffs were to continue in operation, but the control of the customs passed to the Federal Government immediately upon its establishment. The expenses of the Commonwealth were a first charge on the customs and excise revenue; after these had been met the surplus was to be divided amongst the States according to their respective contributions and, for the purposes of such distribution, customs and excise duties were deemed to be contributed by the States where the dutiable articles were consumed. The financial problem of Federation was dealt with without any special consideration by the Convention, by which body its difficulties were greatly underrated. The finance committee consisted of one representative from each State, and, under the guidance of Sir Thomas McIlwraith and W. McMillan, it agreed to recommend that the Federal expenditure should be charged to each colony in proportion to its population and, until there was a uniform tariff, that the surplus revenue should be paid over to the States in such a way that the amount charged to each colony as its part of the Federal expenditure, added to the amount returned, would be equal to the total amount contributed by such colony on dutiable articles consumed. But it was further recommended that after a uniform tariff was imposed the division of the surplus should be according to population. The actual recommendation of the committee was that this distribution on a population basis should be introduced "some time after a uniform tariff

was imposed," its idea being that it would not be long before the consumption of dutiable goods per inhabitant would closely approximate in all the colonies. However, as we have seen, the recommendations of the finance committee were disregarded and in the Bill as passed by the Convention the "book-keeping system" was a permanent part of the constitution.

As a conclusion to its proceedings the Convention adopted the following resolution :

That this Convention recommends that provision be made by the Parliaments of the several Colonies for submitting for the *approval* of the people of the Colonies respectively the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia as framed by this Convention.

It will be observed that the Bill was to be submitted for the "approval" of the people, instead of for their "consideration." This assumption of authority on the part of the Convention; not warranted by the terms of the Agreement which called that body into being, was greatly resented by the opponents of Federation and gave them a strong advantage in their criticism of the Bill.

The Convention was formally dissolved on 9th April 1891, and it was expected by ardent Federalists that before many months the Commonwealth would come into being, but the work of the Convention met with no popular response. A few leading politicians and some of the principal newspapers saw that Federation was a national necessity, but the majority of the people were well satisfied to go on as they had been going on in the past and had to be educated to adopt the Federal idea. So far as New South Wales was concerned, and without that colony it was acknowledged that Federation would be impossible, there was no one in a position to undertake the work of education. The Parkes Ministry was divided upon the question, and when it met Parliament in May 1891, although Federation was given some prominence in the Governor's speech, it had to take a place sub-

ordinate to several other questions. In Parliament itself, opposition was at once shown to the Federal idea and G. H. Reid, an advanced Free Trader, moved an amendment to the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's speech, condemnatory of the proposals of the late Convention. Parkes, however, found unexpectedly large support amongst the official Opposition, and the Reid amendment was negatived by 67 votes to 35.

The way was now clear for the Convention Bill, but to the great surprise of both friends and opponents Parkes announced that it would be preceded by a Local Government Bill and an Electoral Bill. Thereupon Dibbs moved a vote of censure on the Government, which was defeated only by the casting vote of the Speaker. Parliament was immediately dissolved, and though Parkes was still left in power, his hold on office was too insecure to admit of his doing anything to advance the Federal movement. In the circumstances, Parkes adhered to the programme announced during the previous session. The importance of the first session of the new Parliament was to make it clear that the two new issues of Federation and Labour would operate to keep the fiscal issue in check and, further, that of these two new issues Labour was for the moment the more powerful. When Parkes gave up office in October 1891, he was succeeded by Dibbs, an anti-Federationist, and for the time being Federation disappeared from the official programme.

It was plain to all Australia that the success or failure of the Federal idea rested with New South Wales, and the considerable interval that now elapsed before any vital step forward was achieved must be attributed to the fact that the man to whom alone Federation at this time was a supreme enthusiasm, and in whom the idea seemed to be personified, was ill and had ceased to be of political consequence in his own State. The banking crisis of 1892-93 was also an important factor in diverting attention from the great issue, as was the appearance of Labour as a militant power in the Parliaments of the colonies.

The official leadership of the Federal Party was assumed by Barton on Parkes' retirement, and, as it was impossible to associate himself in this cause with Reid, who was his natural fiscal ally, Barton, preferring the cause of Union to that of Free Trade, took office in the Protectionist Ministry of Dibbs. Now the declared policy of Dibbs was not only the immediate imposition of protective duties, but the postponement of the Federal resolutions for a year; it was, consequently, not surprising that Barton's move was received with general astonishment, until he had explained the nature of his arrangement with the new Premier. This was that the Ministry as a body was to express general approval of the Convention Bill and allow the question of Federation to be brought forward early in the ensuing session, when no member of the Ministry was to support any destructive amendment which might be proposed. By this arrangement Barton hoped to keep Federation, which otherwise would have remained merely an academic question, within the circle of practical politics. Reid had become the leader of the Free Trade Opposition and Parkes was practically isolated, but the aged statesman, who was then seventy-eight years of age, determined to make a bold attempt to get behind the politicians to the people, and in March 1892 proposed to Parliament that an elective constituent Convention should be summoned to deal with the great question as it was left by the Convention of the preceding year. Even Barton did not see his way to support such a step, though this is actually the course adopted by Reid four years later.

The first sign of Reid's advance in the direction of Federation appeared in November 1892, when, at a meeting of the Free Trade Party, he observed that events in America, *i.e.* the election of a Democratic president pledged to a reduction of import duties, had radically changed the prospects of Free Trade under a Federal regime. Reid had likened New South Wales joining in a Federation with the other states to a sober man entering into a partnership

with five drunkards. How Grover Cleveland's election in the United States altered the fundamental basis of Reid's elegant comparison was left to his hearers' imagination, but small as was the comfort to be derived from his admission, it was gladly accepted by Federalists, although it was merely a coincidence that a few days later Barton was allowed by the Cabinet to move a series of resolutions bearing on Federation. These were :

1. That this House reaffirms its opinion in favour of . . . Federation . . . and . . . approves of the main principles of the Convention Bill.
2. That the said Bill should be considered in Committee of the Whole, and such amendments as may be desired by the Legislative Bodies of this and the other Colonies should, together with the Draft Bill, be remitted for the consideration of a *second Convention*, similarly appointed, and reporting to the several Parliaments, and that the question of the final adoption by any Colony of any proposal for a Federal Constitution *should be submitted to the People* in their electoral capacity.

These resolutions were passed, but not without opposition, objection being made not so much to Federation itself as to the draft Bill of the Convention. Similar resolutions were moved in the Legislative Council, where they were also agreed to. Barton's next step was to have the Convention Bill considered in committee ; accordingly in the following session (23rd November 1892) he moved in the Legislative Assembly a motion to that effect. The debate which ensued showed that there was likely to be Radical opposition to the principle of Federation, as well as to the Convention Bill, and Rae, a Free Trade Labour representative, voiced the opinion of the majority of his colleagues when he declared that " Federation would do nothing to meet the social and industrial problems so urgently pressing for a solution," and that the Bill " was of too rigid a character to suit the progressive character of Australian democracy." Before the debate could be concluded, a motion, to which reference is elsewhere made,

was carried against the Government, involving the retirement from the Ministry of its two foremost Federationists, Barton and O'Connor, and for a time nothing further was heard of Federation in the Parliament of New South Wales.

The movement towards Federation lost much of its strength owing to this indifference of Parliament, but it gained ultimately by the education of public opinion outside politics, which now proceeded apace. Various local Federal Leagues had already been formed after the pattern of the original League at Corowa, and in June 1893, urged by a deputation of the Australian Natives' Association, Barton summoned a preliminary meeting at Sydney to consider the best means of promoting the formation of local leagues and of concentrating public sentiment in favour of Federation. A Central League was formed in Sydney and had a small success, but the leaders of the movement could hardly claim that they had stirred public feeling towards Federation.

In Victoria, where the Australian Natives' Association was particularly strong, a section of the public began to exhibit an active interest in the cause of Federation, which seemed in danger of being lost through the neglect of politicians. Various public associations showed sympathy with the movement, and Federation Leagues were organized in all the colonies to discuss the Bill and to urge the importance of federal union upon the people. In July 1893 a Conference of delegates from Federation Leagues and similar associations in New South Wales and Victoria was held at Corowa, and at this Quick presented in its primary form the suggestion which later became the basis of the Enabling Acts.

The retirement of Barton and O'Connor left the Dibbs Government predominantly anti-Federal. In May 1894 Dibbs, in an address to his constituents at Tamworth, propounded a scheme for Australian unification which he elaborated in a letter to Patterson, Premier of Victoria, in which it was suggested that New South Wales and

Victoria should unite and thus form a great colony which would presently attract the other colonies within its "sphere of extended influence." The scheme was at once condemned by the leading politicians of all parties and by the Federalist press, and was at no time taken into consideration as a contribution towards uniting the colonies. This was not because the Dibbs scheme was without merits, for it had many, but because its author was himself suspect and credited with designs to obstruct the federal union of the colonies.

Barton after his resignation from the Ministry soon got out of touch with Dibbs and his other colleagues. He retained his seat in the Assembly until the dissolution of July 1894, but at the ensuing election he failed in obtaining a seat in the new Parliament. He had become a Protectionist during his association with Dibbs and, in spite of his motion in September 1891 against raising the fiscal question pending the attainment of Federation, he had assisted the Protectionist Party in effecting a radical change in the tariff a few months later. It was therefore not unnatural that in his efforts to gain a seat he should be opposed by Free Traders, Federationists, and anti-Federationists alike.

The election of 1894 was fought largely on the question of the delinquencies of Dibbs and his colleagues, and of Free Trade and the taxation of unimproved land values; nevertheless, Federation was frequently mentioned. The election went against the Dibbs Party, the Ministry resigned, and the Governor, Sir Robert Duff, ignoring Parkes, sent at once for Reid. In a manifesto issued to the East Sydney electors, the new Premier showed how the land lay. "I will lose no time," he said, "in restoring the subject of Australian Federation to its rightful position of importance and urgency." Parkes, who did not credit Reid's professions in regard to Federation, sought to forestall him by setting down a motion for 14th November 1894: "That . . . it is in the highest sense desirable that Parliament, without loss of time, should resume the

consideration of the federation of these colonies under one national Government." Reid, however, arranged to receive a deputation from the Federal League and the interview took place two days before Parkes's resolution could be taken. The deputation placed before Reid Quick's scheme, with the report of the League thereon and in reply Reid regretted many passages of his opposition to the Convention Bill, admitted that it would probably form the bulk of any future Federal Constitution, and, while recapitulating his former objections to the Bill, expressed himself as heartily approving the work of the League. He also promised to invite the other Premiers to meet him in conference early next year, so as to evolve some scheme for united action. Parkes's resolution was carried, but without harm to Reid, who was able to say that he had anticipated all Parkes's requirements, in the answer which he had given to the recent deputation.

The Premiers' Conference convened by Reid met in Hobart at the end of January 1895; the six colonies, but not New Zealand, were represented. Some formal resolutions having been proposed and passed, Turner and Kingston were appointed as a committee to draw up for the consideration of the Conference "the draft of a type of Bill suitable for giving effect to the resolutions of the Conference." The draft as finally approved specified—

1. That each colony should pass an Act providing for the Election on its Parliamentary Franchise of Ten Representatives to a Federal Convention.
2. That this Convention should frame a Federal Constitution.
3. That the Convention should then adjourn for a stated period to enable the several Parliaments to consider its work.
4. That the Convention should then meet a second time to reconsider its work in the light of amendments proposed by the Parliaments.
5. That the amended proposals should, on a day agreed upon, be referred to the electors of each colony for rejection or acceptance.

6. That if majorities in two or more colonies should accept the proposals they should be forwarded to the Imperial Government to be passed into law.

When Reid met Parliament after the Conference, he took up the ordinary business of the Government, easily defeating a vote of censure moved by Dibbs on 28th February, and proceeded to carry out his programme of fiscal reform. His Federal supporters, who were, however, not numerous, were rather dissatisfied with this postponement of Federation, and Parkes endeavoured to take advantage of this by moving a resolution to the effect that the continuance of Ministers in office would prejudice Federation. Parkes had the support of the bulk of the Protectionists, but his manœuvre failed, as Reid had the substantial majority of 33 in a House of 101. Although Reid was thus overwhelmingly strong in the elective House he was unable to carry his proposals into law on account of the opposition of the Legislative Council, to overcome which he undertook a popular campaign for the reform of that Chamber and dissolved the Assembly when it had been in existence for hardly twelve months. The elections confirmed Reid in power, but with a greatly reduced majority and one that was not so enthusiastic as it had been in the previous Parliament. Parkes had failed to secure election to the new Parliament and Reid was thus relieved of an implacable critic; Dibbs also was amongst the defeated. Parliament met on 14th August 1895, but it was not until 23rd October that the Government introduced the Federal Enabling Bill, which was discussed very fully but with little enthusiasm and became law on 23rd December. The principal change made in it during its passage through Parliament was the addition of a proviso that the acceptance of the constitution by the electors should depend upon an affirmative vote of not less than 50,000.

Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania lost no time in following the example of New South Wales. Victoria required that the votes cast for the acceptance of the constitution should not be less than 50,000; South

Australia stipulated for a majority only, and Tasmania an affirmative poll of 6000. Western Australia and Queensland delayed their consideration of an Enabling Bill, and without the adhesion of Queensland there was great reluctance in New South Wales to take the next and most vital step forward. Sir Hugh Nelson, who was Premier of Queensland, was in no sense an enthusiastic Federalist ; at the same time he recognized that his colony might be compelled to join a Federation with the other colonies, in which case it would be advisable that it should be represented in the Convention to which the framing of the constitution would be entrusted. Nelson himself, as well as a large section of the Queensland Parliament, were in favour of the Convention delegates being chosen by Parliament and in such manner that the three divisions which aspired to be each a separate colony should have representation. A Bill was accordingly presented to the Assembly, and passed by that body, providing that the representatives of Queensland to the Federal Convention should be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly grouped so as to represent the three divisions of the colony. When the Bill reached the Council it was amended so as to give the power of electing delegates to the Council and Assembly sitting together ; the Assembly, however, refused to consent to this amendment as the Council itself was not an elective body and, as it was found impossible to adjust the two views, the Bill was dropped. The Governments of the other eastern colonies now decided that it was not advisable to wait any longer for Queensland, and by agreement between New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, the date of the Convention elections in these colonies was fixed for 4th March 1897. Meanwhile, Western Australia was engaged on an Enabling Bill and it was decided that the delegates should be chosen not by the parliamentary electors, but by the two Houses of Parliament sitting together, and that the constitution as framed by the Convention should be submitted to the people if approved by Parliament.

These proceedings had caused a general awakening of interest in Federation, which had been hitherto absent from the movement, and the New South Wales Federalists conceived the happy idea of holding a People's Convention in order to arouse further interest. Some 200 representatives of various societies interested in the Federal movement and drawn from various colonies, but principally from New South Wales, met at Bathurst in order to discuss the question of Federation, taking for their text the Convention Bill of 1891. The gathering was very successful; its proceedings were widely reported and evoked great interest throughout the colonies, and the People's Convention, if it threw no particular light on the debateable points of Federation, greatly stimulated the popular interest in the Federal movement.

In New South Wales the Labour Party put forward ten candidates chosen by the Political Labour League with a platform of a single Chamber, one man one vote, payment of members, elective Ministries, the initiative and the referendum, but none of its candidates secured election. In Victoria there were three Labour candidates, and Trenwith, who was one of them, was elected, the only Labour representative amongst the fifty who composed the Convention.

The Convention met at Adelaide on 22nd March 1897 and, after discussion, decided to lay aside the Bill of 1891 and to submit resolutions embodying the outlines of a new constitution. To discuss these, the Convention organized itself as a Parliament. It adjourned on 23rd April to enable the Premiers to attend the Imperial Conference in London; it met again in Sydney on 2nd September, on the return of the Premiers, and held its final session in Melbourne from 20th January to 17th March 1898. During the absence of the Premiers, the Adelaide draft, as had been arranged, was discussed by the Legislatures of the several colonies. The upshot was not very illuminating. There was a general division of opinion between the large and the small states, which was reflected

n the two opposite views as to the proper relation between the Upper and Lower Houses, but which was blurred somewhat by a cross division of opinion between a Liberal and Conservative standpoint, represented respectively by the Upper and Lower Houses of the various colonies. Opposition to the draft was strongest in New South Wales and least pronounced in Tasmania; it followed the lines of the discussions in the Convention, the outlook of the state politician being affected, consciously or unconsciously, by the fear of the probable eclipse of the state Parliaments by the Federal Parliament.

The chief points of controversy in the Convention related to the representation of states in the Senate, chiefly as to whether there should be equal representation or according to population; the powers of the Senate; the adjustment of differences between the two Houses; the finances of the Commonwealth and of the states; the control over the waters of the rivers passing through two or more states; the site of the capital; differential railway rates and bounties. A great deal of time was devoted both in the Convention and the state Parliaments to the discussion of proposals for dealing with deadlocks between the Senate and the Representatives, but outside Parliament the chief attention was devoted to the financial question as affecting the states and the Commonwealth.

From the point of view of the Commonwealth the problem of finance was very simple. The customs and excise revenues would be surrendered by the states; these, even according to the lowest computation, would afford more revenue than the Commonwealth Government could possibly require and the budget of the Federal Treasurer would therefore be one of great simplicity. From the standpoint of the state Treasurers, the problem was far otherwise. They would be shorn of their most considerable source of revenue, forced probably to have to resort to increased direct taxation, and be at all times in the uncertain position of not knowing what returns would be made to them out of the surplus, if surplus

there should be after the Commonwealth had paid its way.

The most ardent Federalists had their minds fixed on the grave points naturally arising where a new and highly Democratic constitution was in the making, and were at first disposed to treat very lightly questions, financial and other, not strictly of a constitutional character. This attitude could not long be maintained. The state Treasurers soon became apprehensive as to the possible effects of Federation on their finances, and the irreconcilable anti-Federalists found, in the possible financial injury of the states, their most powerful means of attacking Federation itself. The criticism of the draft Bills and their defence eventually circled round the financial aspect of Federation and the various proposals made for safeguarding the finances of the states—the finances of the Commonwealth being considered safe in any circumstances.

It was agreed that interstate Free Trade would necessarily be a feature of any effective scheme of Federation; there would thus be a great decrease in the volume of goods to which a tariff could be applied and amateurs in finance saw that after the Commonwealth had provided for itself there was likely to be a very inadequate provision for the states unless, indeed, a very high tariff was imposed. To five out of the six states a high tariff would not be objectionable as they had already adopted the principle of Protection, but it was different with New South Wales, the most important of the six, which drew sufficient revenue from a tariff of exceptional lightness and enjoyed a measure of prosperity denied to the majority of its sister states. One of the prime difficulties of the protagonists of Federation, in their contests over the first and second Convention Bills, was to carry on their discussions without making it appear that a high tariff was a necessary condition of Federation, although at no stage of the controversy was there any serious pretension that Free Trade would be or could be adopted as the policy of the Commonwealth.

The constitution framed by the Conference of 1891

provided that on the imposition of uniform duties of customs and excise the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth should be returned to the several states in proportion to the amount of revenue raised therein, or in such manner as Parliament might determine. The method of distribution here specifically mentioned was what came to be called "the book-keeping system," which involved an account being kept of the destination of all dutiable goods entering the Commonwealth and the crediting of the revenue derived therefrom to the state wherein the goods were consumed. The people of Australia were not to be considered for fiscal purposes as citizens of the Commonwealth sharing the common burdens of their country according to their ability to bear them, but as partners entering on a business transaction from which all sentiment was banished.

It would hardly be worth while discussing the financial provisions of the Bill of 1891. These attracted little attention at the time, public sentiment not being as yet seriously inclined towards Federation. The first draft of the Bill laid before the Adelaide Convention foreshadowed financial arrangements differing very materially from those approved by the Convention of 1891.

The new Bill provided that uniform duties should be imposed within two years of the setting up of the Federation. After the imposition of these uniform duties the customs and excise duties received in any state should be returned to it, less the expenditure of the Commonwealth on the transferred services carried on in such state and its proportion of the new expenditure of the Commonwealth. This system was to stand for five years only, thereafter the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth was to be divided amongst the states on the basis of their population. There had not been any suggestion in 1891 that the expenditure of the Commonwealth should be limited, but in the Bill prepared by the Adelaide Convention a clause was inserted limiting the spending powers of the Federal Parliament to £300,000 a year on new services, and to £1,250,000 on the

transferred services, the latter amount representing the expenditure permitted in excess of revenue received for these services. The possible extravagance of the Commonwealth being checked in this manner, the revenue interests of the states were safeguarded by a provision that, during the first five years after the imposition of uniform duties, the aggregate amount to be paid to the states for any year should not be less than the aggregate amount returned to them during the year last preceding the imposition of such duties.

It would be charitable to suppose that these provisions were put forward for the purpose of discussion only, otherwise they were a most inept contribution to the solution of the financial difficulty. The finances of the states were not safeguarded by directing that the aggregate amount paid to the states before Federation should be returned to them after Federation. Before Federation New South Wales' share of the aggregate revenue of the colonies was about 22·5 per cent ; under a uniform tariff it would have been 36·5 per cent, so that if the aggregate sum raised were not greater under Federation than that obtained under the separate tariffs, the return made to the five other colonies would be reduced by about 18 per cent, that is to say, from 77·5 per cent of the aggregate to 63·5 per cent. The finances of New South Wales would be safe ; those of the other colonies would be dislocated.

When the Convention came to discuss these provisions their weakness was recognized, and it was agreed that the three Treasurers who were members of the Convention, Turner, Reid, and Holder, should confer and make other suggestions to the conference. The Treasurers' scheme was in due course presented to the Convention. It provided that on the imposition of a uniform tariff there should be a book-keeping period of one year to enable the contribution of the various states to be ascertained. At the end of the year the book-keeping should cease, and the surplus revenues of the Commonwealth should be returned to the states according to the proportions ascertained during the book-keeping period, but these proportions

should yearly be increased or diminished by regular steps during the ensuing four years until at the end of the period the distribution was brought to a population basis. The provisions for safeguarding the interests of the states were left untouched.

The draft Bill was next considered by the Legislatures of the various states; and the Bill with the many suggested amendments of the Legislatures then went back to the Convention, whose second session was held in Sydney. The first step of the Convention was the appointment of a financial committee comprising the Treasurers of the five colonies represented and a second delegate from each colony. Very little was done in Sydney towards solving the financial difficulty and it was not until the Convention met in Melbourne that any progress was made. The financial committee presented its report to the Convention and recommended the omission of the guarantee clauses adopted in Adelaide, as well as the sliding scale and the ultimate distribution of the surplus on a population basis. It favoured a transition period of five years, during which an account should be taken of the dutiable goods consumed in each state; at the expiration of this period it was to be left to the Federal Parliament to decide as to the mode in which the surplus should be parcelled out amongst the states. It was also recommended that Western Australia should have special treatment in the event of there being a great reduction in the proportion of revenue returnable to that state as compared with the proportion returnable to the other states, the deficiency being made good out of the revenues of the Commonwealth. The proposals in regard to the five years' book-keeping and the distribution of the surplus were adopted by the Convention; Western Australia being provided for by allowing it to levy duties on Australian imports for five years, these duties being gradually diminished until they expired at the end of the period named. The most notable change made by the Convention was the insertion of a provision that of the net revenue of the Commonwealth from duties of customs

and excise not more than one-fourth should be applied annually by the Commonwealth towards its own expenditure, the remaining three-fourths being returned to the states. This provision was known in subsequent financial controversies as the Braddon clause, having been proposed by Sir Edward Braddon, Premier of Tasmania, and adopted by the Convention, now weary of the endless controversy regarding Federal finance, as the most acceptable way of carrying out the idea, suggested at Adelaide by Holder, of safeguarding the finances of the states during the period of uncertainty that would necessarily follow the adoption of Federation.

The additional expenditure that Federation would impose on the Australian communities was estimated by the financial committee of the Convention at £300,000. This was a ridiculously low estimate. It took no account of the expenditure required to bring the defence system of the country to a state of efficiency, nor of the probable cost of old age pensions and other services which it was anticipated would be provided by the Commonwealth. There was nothing in the constitution itself which encouraged the expectation of so restricted an expenditure. There was no limit placed upon the expenditure which Parliament might sanction, nor the method by which revenue might be raised; but, so long as the Braddon clause remained part of the constitution, if the defence of the country were to be made efficient and other urgent services provided for, it would be necessary either to resort to direct taxation or raise an enormous customs revenue. No one in a responsible position ventured to suggest that recourse should be had to direct taxation to supply the monetary requirements of the Commonwealth, and as no one could suppose that the services of the Commonwealth would be allowed to remain inefficient, the opponents of Federation were able to found upon the operation of the Braddon clause their most destructive criticism of the Convention Bill.

The financial provisions of the Bill were reported on by

the statisticians of the various Governments, and discussed by the financial editors of the principal papers. They one and all subjected the Bill to severe criticism, but these criticisms, though destructive, were not illuminating, and no practicable alternative was offered by the statisticians to the proposals of the Convention. It was in New South Wales that opposition to federation was strongest, and this attitude was justified on the ground of the unsatisfactory character of the financial provisions of the Bill. So far as concerned the great majority the opposition arose out of an instinctive dislike of linking the fortunes of the mother colony with those of its neighbours. It was not confined to any political party; large numbers of Free Traders, Protectionists, and Labour sympathizers were found arrayed against the Bill. The Free Traders had a ready argument in the Braddon clause, which, they contended, made a heavy customs tariff inevitable; the Protectionist opponents of Federation had to admit the probable effect of the Braddon clause, but they made common cause with their fiscal opponents in declaring that the greater part of the money obtained through the customs by the Federal Government would not be handed back to the state from which it was obtained, but in all probability would be used to prop up the finances of one or other of the necessitous states. If it were admitted for the sake of argument that the greater part of the money obtained through the customs would be handed back to the contributing states, then so far as New South Wales was concerned, the additional revenue, being unnecessary as the state was sufficiently supplied with revenue from existing sources, would be wastefully expended, and inevitably prove injurious to the well-being of the state.

The contending Federalists and opponents of the Convention Bill carried on their wordy warfare in regard to finance throughout the whole period intervening between the adoption of the Braddon clause and the first Referendum. Neither side made converts from the other, for in truth the position of each would have remained practically the same

whatever the issue of the financial controversy. There was a fairly numerous body, inclined towards Federation, which stood by watching, confused by the press clamour of the Federal antagonists, and deterred from supporting the Convention Bill until satisfied in regard to the objections raised by the statisticians and the financial editors. The truth did not emerge from the controversy. In their ardour for Federation its supporters refused to admit that it would add any burdens to the community, while their opponents, who saw rightly that there would be a large increase of expenditure, refused to believe that the great advantages of union would outweigh all the financial burdens which, they argued, were inevitable, and which probably would have hampered the young Commonwealth had not the world-wide economic changes following the year 1903 swept them out of sight.

As it finally left the Convention, the main provisions of the Bill of 1898 followed generally those of the Bill of 1891, yet with some very important alterations. It proposed to establish, under the Crown, a Federal union of the Australian colonies, to be designated the Commonwealth of Australia. A Federal Executive Council was created, to be presided over by a governor-general appointed by the Queen. The Legislature was to consist of two Houses—a Senate, in which each colony joining the Federation at its inception was conceded the equal representation of six members ; and a House of Representatives, to consist, as nearly as possible, of twice the number of senators, to which the provinces were to send members in proportion to population, with a minimum number of five representatives for each of the original Federating states. The principle of payment of members was adopted for the Senate as well as for the House of Representatives, the honorarium being fixed at £400 per annum. The nominative principle for the Upper House was rejected, both Houses being elective, on a suffrage similar to that existing in each colony for the popular Chamber at the foundation of the Commonwealth. At the same time, it was left to

the Federal Parliament to establish a Federal franchise, which, however, could only operate in the direction of the extension, not the restriction, of any of the existing privileges of the individual colonies ; so that in South Australia the right of women to vote could not be withdrawn by the central authority. While the House of Representatives was to be elected for a period of three years, senators were to be appointed for twice that term, provision being made for the retirement of half their number every third year. The capital of the Commonwealth was to be established in Federal territory.

To the Federal authority was assigned power to deal with a large number of matters, with the provision that in case of a conflict between Federal and State law, the former would prevail. Customs and excise were to be taken over on the establishment of the Commonwealth ; also posts and telegraphs, naval and military defence, lighthouses, and lightships, beacons and buoys, and quarantine, on dates to be proclaimed, but without further legislation. A uniform tariff of customs and excise was to be imposed within a period of two years, inter-colonial trade then to become absolutely free. As it was recognized that the transfer of the services mentioned would leave the states with large deficiencies in their provincial finances, a provision was inserted in the Bill under which the Commonwealth was required to raise from customs and excise duties four times the sum needed from that source for its own purposes in the exercise of the original powers conferred upon it, and to hand the excess thus raised to the local treasuries. Other sources of revenue were left open to the Federal Treasurer, so that he should not be compelled to go to the customs for the whole revenue which might be required. For five years after the imposition of the uniform tariff it was provided that the surplus revenue raised should be returned to the states in the proportions of their actual contributions—to be ascertained by a system of accounts—and thereafter in such proportions as might be considered fair

by the Federal Parliament. The State of Western Australia, where the customs revenue was exceptionally high and largely collected on the produce of the other colonies, was to be permitted gradually to relinquish its intercolonial duties during a period of five years, instead of abandoning them at once, and to retain for its own purposes the revenue thus secured. Power was given to the Commonwealth to take over the railways of the colonies with their consent and to take over the whole or part of the state debts, applying the surplus customs and excise revenue to the payment of the interest charge thereon. The proper administration of all laws relating to the transaction of trade between the states of the union was to be directed by an interstate commission, on whom extensive powers were conferred. Provision was made for the prevention of the imposition of preferential and discriminating railway tariffs which might operate unjustly against a neighbouring colony, due regard always being paid, however, to the financial obligations of the state which had laid down the lines. The maintenance of the rivers in a state of navigability was recognized as coming within the trade and commerce provisions ; but the people, of a colony through which a river flowed, were not to be deprived of a " reasonable " use of its waters for purposes of irrigation and conservation.

The Senate and House of Representatives were to have equally the power of originating Bills, with the exception of Bills appropriating revenue or imposing taxation, the right of originating which was reserved to the House of Representatives. These appropriation or taxation Bills could not be amended by the Senate ; but the Upper House might suggest amendments, or recommend the omission of any of their provisions, the House of Representatives dealing with these suggestions as it pleased. In all other matters of legislation the two Houses were granted equal powers, and it was provided that, in the event of any Bill being twice passed by the House of Representatives and twice rejected or shelved by the

Senate, the two Houses could be simultaneously dissolved; and if this failed to provide a solution of the difficulty, a joint sitting might be held, at which the Bill in dispute could be adopted by a majority of three-fifths of the members present and voting at the joint sitting. The judicial power of the Commonwealth was vested in a High Court of Australia, empowered to hear appeals from all Federal courts, or courts having Federal jurisdiction, from the Supreme Courts of the states and from the interstate commissions. The right of appeal to the Privy Council in all cases not involving the interpretation of the Federal constitution or the constitution of a state was not abrogated; but the Federal Parliament was empowered to limit the matters which might be taken to England. Appeal to the Privy Council on points of constitutional law was forbidden. Lastly, the Federal constitution could only be amended if the proposal were first adopted by an absolute majority of both the Senate and House of Representatives, and afterwards accepted by means of the Referendum, both by a majority of the people of the Commonwealth and by a majority of the states.

Warmly received in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, the Bill was viewed rather coldly by a section of the people of New South Wales and this feeling rapidly developed into one of active hostility; the main points of objection being the financial provisions, equal representation in the Senate, and the difficulty which the larger colonies must experience in securing an amendment of the constitution in the event of a conflict with the smaller states. As far as the other colonies were concerned it was evident that the Bill was safe, and public attention throughout Australasia was riveted on New South Wales, where a fierce political contest was raging which, it was recognized, would decide the fate of the measure for the time being.

Much depended upon the attitude which Reid would adopt. On 28th March 1898 he delivered at the Town Hall, Sydney, what is known as the "Yes-No" Speech.

Nearly all the time at his disposal was taken up in emphasizing the great risks and the sacrifices involved in New South Wales' acceptance of the Bill. He declared the Braddon clause to be the "gravest blemish in the Bill," and spoke of the compromise on the rivers question as useless, in that no one could determine what was "a reasonable use of the waters for irrigation purposes." There was very much more to the same effect, but, to the surprise of his audience, Reid wound up his strong indictment by declaring that, in spite of all, he approved of the sentiment of the Bill and proposed to vote for it at the Referendum.

This deliverance of the New South Wales Premier was received with derision by all parties, and Reid found that he had practically eliminated himself as a factor in the Federal controversy. All other politicians of importance ranged themselves on one side or the other and the battle raged very fiercely up to the day of the poll. The opposition in New South Wales comprised many elements, but its main strength naturally was the anti-Federalists, who were content that the colony should remain entirely master of its own affairs, untrammelled by connexions or commitments with the other colonies. There were also in opposition many Free Traders, who thought that the last vestige of Free Trade would disappear from Australia if New South Wales were to join an intimate Federation with the other colonies; in their hearts many of them preferred to preserve their fiscal faith even at the loss of Federation. In addition there was a large body of citizens, favourable to Federation itself, who were influenced against the Bill by the strong condemnation which expert opinion had passed upon its financial provisions.

As regards the other four colonies there was not serious opposition either to Federation in the abstract or to the particular form of it embodied in the Convention Bill, such opposition as there was grew less as the agitation in New South Wales grew louder, and at no time was there any question but that the Bill would be agreed to when it came before the electors.

The New South Wales Parliament had passed the Enabling Bill without much opposition being shown towards it, but there can hardly be any doubt that the majority of both Houses were of opinion that Federation was not a living question and that the Bill of 1898 would be stillborn as was its predecessor of 1891. It was determined, however, that Federation should not be imposed upon the colony owing to the indifference of its citizens, and towards the end of 1897 the minimum vote, by which the adoption of the Bill at the Referendum could be secured, was raised from 50,000 to 80,000. This change was proclaimed throughout Australia as a breach of faith, but the competence of Parliament to make the change could not be denied, and, after all, the votes required represented only one-fourth of the electorate of the colony.

The two Federations which those concerned in framing the constitution had always in mind were the United States and Canada, and whilst many persons saw in Federation the opening of a larger sphere of national activity, few saw that the union of the Australian people foretold the wide extension of democratic principles and a transfer of political power to the working classes. The experience neither of the United States nor of Canada gave any indication that Labour was likely to emancipate itself from the thralldom of the traditional parties, with the intent of seeking above all else the preponderance of its own interests. Least of all was this the view of the Labour Party, which saw itself without representatives in the parliamentary Convention of 1891, and deliberately excluded by popular vote from a place in the Convention of 1897. Labour did not take this exclusion greatly to heart, being occupied with its own domestic affairs, and in the controversies which followed it took a very small part.

In Victoria the Labour Party was in close alliance with Turner, and gave no evidence that there was or might be a Labour view of Federation. The rank and file were strongly Federalist as they were strongly Protec-

tionist, not so the leaders; and the ordinary observer might well be pardoned if he concluded that to the Victorian Labour Party Federation was merely the open door to a wider protection. The alliance of the Party with Turner gave Trenwith a seat in the Convention of 1897, but he went there without definite instructions as to his Party's attitude towards the Bill of that year, and although the only Labour man amongst the fifty delegates, his contributions to the discussions of the Convention were not more distinctively Labour than that of half-a-dozen other members.

The feeling towards Federation in South Australia had always been cordial, but the rejection of all the Labour candidates in 1897 had the effect of disposing the Party to take up an attitude of strong criticism towards the work of the Convention. Putting together the deliverances of the various Labour leaders, made at different times, it would seem that they desired a more uncompromising Democratic franchise than provided by the Bill and a more thoroughly muzzled Senate; they boggled at the necessity of obtaining the Royal Assent; they considered that excessive powers were being conferred on the Federal Parliament, and that the control in its turn of the Federal Parliament by the High Court was unreasonable. One of their most typical actions in regard to the draft Bill, when it was being considered by the South Australian Parliament, was an endeavour to restrict the powers of the Federal Parliament in the matter of taxation to direct taxation, and a proposal to that effect was made by Macpherson. When the Convention Bill was rejected by New South Wales, it is characteristic that Kingston's refusal to attend the Premiers' Conference, summoned by Reid to consider amendments to the Bill, was intended to please and was, in fact, pleasing to the Labour Party. This attitude of the parliamentary Party in South Australia was supported by the Party at large only so far as it desired to alter the Convention Bill in a Democratic direction, but the Province had too much to

gain from Federation for the Bill to be sacrificed for any thing less than essentials.

Queensland did not send delegates to the Convention of 1897; there was therefore no great opportunity of discussing in detail the proposals for Federation, and such as there was did not convey the impression that the Labour Party was likely to contribute anything of importance to their elucidation; but in general the attitude of the leaders was much the same as in New South Wales. In the mother colony, as we have seen, the idea of Federation was, in its early stage of development, largely an affair of politicians, or rather of a group of lawyers and thinkers who were also politicians. This being so, it is somewhat remarkable that the platform of the Labour Electoral League in 1890 should have had for one of its planks, "the Federation of the colonies on a National as opposed to an Imperial basis." The "Imperial" basis was a reference to the words "under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" which subsequently appeared in the preamble to the Bills of 1891 and 1897, and finally in the actual constitution of the Commonwealth. It is not so easy to say what was meant by a "National" basis. The expression was first used by Traill, the editor of the *Sydney Bulletin*, who was notoriously a Republican, and Hinchcliffe, in Queensland, also used the words at an early stage in a Republican sense, declaring himself opposed to Federation under the Crown. The term was, however, used freely by many persons, including most of the Labour leaders, in a vague way as indicating no more than the equivalent of "Australia for the Australians" and that the Governors should be elected or nominated by the local Executives. In any case the use of the expression has only an academic interest, inasmuch as the demand which the term connotes did not at any time become a matter of serious discussion.

There can be no doubt that the speeches of Sir George Grey during his visit to Sydney in 1891 were an important element in the attitude of Labour towards the Federal

movement. "What," he asked the workers, "will Federation mean to you?" But Grey preached Federation on the basis of "one man, one vote," and he bequeathed an interest, even an enthusiasm, for it, though for a Federation on conditions. The New South Wales parliamentary party was silent on the Federal Enabling Act of 1895 until it reached the Committee stage, when McGowen proposed a minimum poll of three-quarters of the registered electors; and Hughes moved an amendment providing that the Convention should consist of representatives from each colony taking part, in the proportion of one for every hundred thousand inhabitants or fraction thereof, provided that no colony should have more than ten or less than five representatives. These motions suggest the kind of attitude that Labour was going to assume with regard to the scheme.

At the Labour Conference of January 1896, a report from the Federal Committee was read, which, with a few additions, was adopted by the delegates. Its recommendations were :

1. That the Federal Parliament should consist of :
 - (a) A House of Representatives elected on a population basis for single-seated electorates;
 - (b) A Second Chamber, to be termed the States Council, to be elected directly by the people of each colony on a population basis, each colony to vote as one constituency.
2. The limitation of the veto of the Second Chamber.
3. The introduction of non-Party Government by elected Ministries.
4. The Initiation and the Referendum to be introduced.
5. Payment of members.
6. One man, one vote franchise.
7. Exclusion of aliens.

At the Conference of the following year, the Second Chamber was taken out of this scheme and the amended platform was presented to the electors when the Convention elections were held early in March 1897. At these elections a full bunch of ten candidates represented the Political

Labour Federation. Of these none was successful, though McGowen polled 41,546 votes ; the lowest elected member received 56,793 votes, while Black, the second Labour candidate on the poll, obtained only about 19,000. McGowen's total represented approximately the full strength of the Labour vote as it existed at that time ; it is therefore plain that his nine colleagues had not the support of the Party in the constituencies.

The movement to increase the minimum vote necessary to secure Federation from 50,000 to 80,000 was supported by the Labour Party in the New South Wales Parliament. This was consistent with its previous action, and when the Bill increasing the minimum passed the Assembly, the Party was found voting solidly for it. When the Commonwealth Bill was adopted by the Convention in March 1898, the parliamentary Party was at length compelled to decide upon a course of action, and a caucus meeting was held on 6th July to decide the matter. The decision of the meeting was : .

1. That the Labour Party declare themselves strongly in favour of Federation on a fair and democratic basis, but offer the strongest opposition to the present Constitution Bill ;
2. That the members of the Party use their own discretion as to their individual action in opposition to the Bill.

If the conclusion arrived at seem weak, it must be conceded in extenuation that the tide was advancing too surely for the Labour Party to contemplate any effective action for stemming its onset. Several of the most eloquent and well-informed members of the Party worked strongly against the Constitution Bill, but they did not carry the rank and file of the Party with them. If it had been otherwise, and the Labour vote had been cast in a block, it would have decided the issue ; but it was split just as decisively as the vote of the rest of the community. The Labour leaders resigned themselves to follow rather than lead. It is curious that their influence should have been

so slender and ineffectual a factor in the progress of that movement which was, in the end, to procure their triumph.

The Referendum was taken on 3rd June 1898 in New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, and on 4th June in South Australia. Western Australia did not take a Referendum with the other colonies, as its Government had decided to await the results of the voting in New South Wales in order to see if that colony would cast an affirmative vote. The following was the result of the voting :

	Affirmative.	Negative.
New South Wales	71,965	66,228
Victoria	100,520	22,099
South Australia	35,800	17,520
Tasmania	11,797	2,716

Federation thus won in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, and would have won in New South Wales also, if the voice of the majority had prevailed. The *vis inertiae* now lay with the minority, and there was a disposition on the part of a considerable body of Federalists to agitate for a reduction of the minimum vote required to carry the Convention Bill. More prudent counsels prevailed, however, and the agitation died out ; but in any circumstances Reid did not propose to allow the matter to be taken out of his hands, and within a week of the Referendum he had despatched a circular letter to the other Australian Premiers inviting them to a conference "to consider certain changes in the Bill which might render it acceptable to New South Wales." The replies were unfavourable, not because the Premiers were unwilling to compromise, but because it was supposed that Barton would come in at the forthcoming elections in New South Wales, as Reid, by his Milton and Moruya speeches and by his admission of Want as Attorney-General to his Ministry, seemed but to be italicizing his character of *politique* in regard to Federation. Meanwhile Barton was in confidential communication with Deakin and Kingston as to the concessions which he thought would be a reasonable offer to the New South Wales electors. These were (1) the capital to be in New South

Wales (most electors supposed this to mean Sydney); (2) the Braddon clause to be eliminated; (3) the absolute for the three-fifths majority at the joint sitting.

The majority of the members of the New South Wales Assembly had been opposed to Federation and would gladly have seen the vote go against it; but their attitude underwent a great change when they found their electorates had pronounced in favour of union. The Referendum was taken when Parliament was on the point of expiry, and on 27th July 1898 the elections for the new Parliament took place. They were fought without any clear-cut issue being put before the electors. Reid posed as a Federationist anxious for the improvement of the Convention Bill, but was opposed in his own electorate by Barton, as one inimical to the cause of Federation. Reid claimed a renewal of the confidence of the electors on account of the achievements of his Government and the necessity of safeguarding Free Trade. Without exception every candidate discussed the question of Federation in his election addresses; very few professed themselves anti-Federationists, though some were strongly against the Convention Bill; but the majority were Federalists almost at any price. Such was the change brought about by the voting at the Referendum. While candidates thus expressed themselves about Federation, they were equally strong, and indeed stronger, in regard to Protection or Free Trade, so that while the election was nominally on the issue of Federation it could be claimed to have been upon the fiscal question also. The result was the return of a large majority of Federalists and at the same time a majority of Protectionists. Reid had a direct following of only 46 out of a House of 125, but with the support of the Labour Party he could hold his own against the Protectionists and he decided to retain office.

Parliament met on 16th August and Reid at once put the following resolutions:

1. Steps to be taken to bring about union.
2. It is desirable that the other colonies should recon-

sider the Bill, and that the following propositions be submitted to the consideration of the other colonies, viz. :

(a) If equal representation be insisted upon, either a simple majority at a joint sitting or a national Referendum should decide any matter in dispute between the two Houses ;

(b) The Braddon (87th) clause to be removed from the Bill ;

(c) The Federal capital to be whereabouts in New South Wales the Federal Parliament should determine ;

(d) Better provision to be made against the alteration of the bounds of a state without its consent, namely, by the protection afforded by clause 127 as to the representation of states ;

(e) Use of inland rivers for water conservation and irrigation to be more clearly safeguarded ;

(f) Money Bills : There to be a uniform practice in respect to these, *i.e.* that provided in the case of taxation Bills, and Bills for the ordinary annual services of the Commonwealth ;

(g) Mode of appeal from the Supreme Courts of the states to be made uniform, *i.e.* appeal to be either to Privy Council or to High Court, not indiscriminately to either.

3. The third resolution embodied the prevailing dissatisfaction as regards the financial provisions ; it was as follows :

Although prepared for the sake of union—if it be placed in other respects upon a fair and just footing—to accept the financial system embodied in the Bill with the one exception mentioned, this House earnestly invites further inquiry into, and a more thorough consideration of, the financial clauses, regarding as evils to be avoided, if possible, excessive burdens of taxation, a prolonged system of book-keeping, uncertainty as to the amount of surplus to be divided, and uncertainty as to the method of distributing it among the states.

The members of the parliamentary Labour Party had almost unanimously opposed the Bill, and the amendments to it demanded before Federation could receive their

support were embodied in the following resolutions proposed by McGowen and accepted by the Assembly :

ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Any proposed alteration approved by both Houses and a Referendum to be submitted to the Governor-General for the Royal Assent ;

When an alteration has in two succeeding sessions been affirmed by an absolute majority in one House, but rejected by the other, such alteration to be submitted to Referendum ;

In the case of alterations respecting transference to Commonwealth of powers retained by the states at the institution of the constitution, such alteration not to have effect unless approved by a majority of electors voting in the state affected.

On the motion of a member of the Opposition, it was further resolved that the number of senators from each state be increased from 6 to 8.

Attorney-General Want, on behalf of the Government, proposed these resolutions in the Legislative Council, where they were substantially altered. The alternative of a Referendum to settle a dispute between the two Houses was omitted ; the capital was demanded for Sydney ; the use of the inland rivers was " to be preserved for their respective colonies " ; the declaration that the House was " prepared for the sake of union to accept the financial system embodied in the Bill " was struck out ; and, finally, the resolutions passed at the instance of the Labour Party were deleted, being replaced by a resolution objecting to the plan of submitting alterations to a Referendum and suggesting that any alteration transferring powers from State to Commonwealth should not take effect in such state without the consent of both its Houses.

The Legislative Council showed itself strongly opposed not only to the Convention Bill but to the idea of Federation ; and the Assembly, which was now undoubtedly federally inclined, was indisposed to make any attempt to harmonize its views with those of the Council. The two sets of resolutions therefore were sent on to the other colonies.

The Premiers' Conference, invited by Reid to consider these resolutions, met at Melbourne on 29th January 1899, and Queensland was represented at it by its Premier, J. R. Dickson. In his negotiations with his fellow Premiers, Reid was greatly handicapped. He was suspected, both by the Parliament which sent him and by the Premiers he was to meet, of lukewarmness in regard to Federation, and he felt that if he did not come to an agreement with the Conference, some one else, probably Barton, would be sent in his place who would certainly find no difficulty in doing so. Hence he could make no fight for the principles laid down by the New South Wales Parliament, and the agreement he brought back to Sydney provided that a dispute between the two Houses might be settled by an absolute majority at a joint sitting; that the Braddon clause should run for ten years, when Parliament might decide as to the disposition of the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth; that the capital was to be in New South Wales, but not within one hundred miles of Sydney, and until the capital was ready Parliament was to sit in Melbourne; that the boundaries of a state should not be altered without the consent of that state; and as regards the amendment of the constitution, that if an amendment were approved by either House of Parliament in two successive sessions it could be submitted to a Referendum, when it would be carried if approved by a majority of voters and a majority of the states.

The other colonies now waited for a further forward movement on the part of New South Wales, and Reid, who had by this time determined in favour of Federation, called Parliament together on 21st February 1899. About a week later the Bill as amended by the Premiers' Conference was passed through the Assembly and reached the Council. There no attempt was made to interfere with the compromise arrived at by the Premiers, but three amendments were made in the Bill as affecting its acceptance by the electorate. These were that the Referendum was to be deferred for three months; that the acceptance

of the Bill was to be conditional on one-third of the electorate voting in its favour; and also on Queensland's consent to the Bill.

Reid refused to accept these amendments. Parliament was prorogued on 30th March and the Governor was advised to exercise his prerogative of appointment to the Council. This sufficed to overcome the Opposition; when on 11th April Parliament again met, the Enabling Bill was once more presented, and being passed without amendment became law on 22nd April. The New South Wales Parliament having now made it possible for the other colonies to consider the amended Bill, the Parliaments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania lost no time in accepting it, and the Referendum was taken on 20th June 1899.

The voting showed that, in the twelve months between the two appeals to the people, the favour in which Federation was held had marvellously increased in all the colonies, while the opposition had decreased in all excepting New South Wales, where 82,741 votes were cast against the Bill compared with 66,228 in the preceding year.

Queensland and Western Australia were now in the position of having either to accept the Bill as approved by the other four colonies or of standing out from participation in the original formation of the Commonwealth. Queensland decided not to accept this risk, and on 22nd September 1899 the people of that colony were given for the first time an opportunity of expressing an opinion in regard to Federation. The Referendum proved to be in favour of the Bill; not indeed by a large majority, but sufficient to silence all moderate opponents of Federation. In Queensland as in New South Wales the metropolitan area was against the acceptance of the Bill, but was overborne by the country constituencies.

From the passage through the Imperial Parliament of the "Federal Council of Australasia" Act in 1885, the course of the Federal movement had remained unaffected by the action of Great Britain until 1897, when, at the

Imperial Conference held at the time of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, some friendly criticisms of the Adelaide draft Bill were made by the English Crown Law officers. These Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, embodied in a Memorandum to Reid as Premier of the senior colony, and they were handed by him to the drafting committee on his return to Australia. The result of these representations was some modification of the provisions in regard to Privy Council appeals, but not sufficient to satisfy the English Law officers. It was therefore with a foreboding of trouble that Australia learnt from a despatch to Lord Beauchamp, received in Sydney on 22nd December 1899, that Chamberlain had requested that when the Australian Commonwealth Bill was sent for the approval of the Imperial Parliament, there should also be sent delegates to explain its provisions should such be found necessary. Delegates from each colony, whose Federalist staunchness was undeniable, were therefore sent to London. These were Barton, Deakin, Kingston, Fysh, and Dickson.

The amendments desired by the Crown Law officers chiefly concerned the right of appeal from the Courts of the Commonwealth, and it was asked that the Constitution should contain a declaration that nothing in the Act or in the Constitution should affect the prerogative of the Crown to grant special leave of appeal to the Queen in Council.

There were other amendments, mainly of a technical character, which the Law officers thought should be made. It was desired that the expression "this Act shall bind the Crown," which appeared in the second covering clause of the proposed Imperial Enabling Act, should be omitted as being prejudicial to the prerogative, and that the provision in the fifth clause, that the laws of the Commonwealth should be in force on British ships plying between ports of the Commonwealth, should be modified as being too wide. It was also suggested that the Constitution, instead of being appended to the ninth covering clause of the Enabling

Act, should be placed as a schedule thereto, and it should be specifically declared that the laws of the Commonwealth were colonial laws within the meaning of the Act of 1865.

Regarding the technical amendments, the delegates raised no great objection, as these involved no important questions of Australian interest, and they devoted their attention to defending the provisions of the draft Constitution limiting the right of appeal to the Privy Council. The particular clause of the original Bill ran as follows :

No appeal shall be permitted to the Queen in Council in any matter involving the interpretation of this Constitution or of the Constitution of a State, unless the public interests of some part of H.M.'s dominions other than the Commonwealth or a State are involved. Except as provided in this section, this Constitution shall not impair any right which the Queen may be pleased to exercise, by virtue of Her Royal Prerogative, to grant special leave of appeal from the High Court to Her Majesty in Council. But the Parliament may make laws limiting the matters in which such leave may be asked.

In a Memorandum to the Colonial Secretary, the delegates referred to the generous attitude taken by the Imperial Government towards the Federal Council Bill in 1885, and emphasized the fact that they had been entrusted with very limited powers by the Australian people, who had approved the Bill as then presented. The delegates' reply elicited a rejoinder from the Imperial Government, which, after stating its objections on the other heads, dealt with the Privy Council Appeals question, and the following points were emphasized :

There would be uncertainty as to the definition of "matters involving the interpretation of the Constitution" and "public interests";

It was objectionable that power should be given to the Federal Parliament to limit the prerogative;

The establishment of two final Courts of Appeal would lead to confusion.

In order the more readily to secure the adhesion of the delegates to the ideas of the Imperial Government, it was

pointed out that there were already proposals in existence for appointing colonial representatives to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and for amalgamating the Judicial Committee with the House of Lords.

While these discussions were proceeding, W. Pember Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, informed the Colonial Office that he was appointed delegate for his colony, and presented a Memorandum suggesting certain concessions to New Zealand. These were :

That New Zealand should preserve the right of joining the Commonwealth at any time or within a specified time as an original State.

That while New Zealand remained outside the Commonwealth, litigants in her higher Courts should have an alternative appeal either to the Privy Council or to the High Court.

That the Commonwealth and New Zealand should be empowered to make arrangements in co-operation for defence purposes.

On the same day (27th March 1900) Parker, delegate for Western Australia, forwarded a Memorandum, asking on behalf of his colony that it should be empowered for the term of five years after the imposition of the Federal tariff to receive the same customs duties as were in force at the passing of the Commonwealth Act, such duties to be collected by the Commonwealth ; and it was stated that if this concession were granted, Western Australia would refer the Act to the people for their acceptance.

On 5th April there was a Conference at the Colonial Office, following which Chamberlain wired to the Governors of the five colonies the position of affairs, and stated that Clause 74 (concerning the Appeal to the Privy Council) was the only point on which the Imperial Government must insist, at the same time enumerating the objections to that clause. He also asked that an opinion should be expressed as to the Western Australian demands, and on the 17th he further suggested that he should be advised in regard to those of New Zealand.

On 19th April the Premiers met at Melbourne to consider what reply should be made to the Colonial Secretary. The demands of Western Australia and New Zealand were refused, with the result that, on the intervention of Chamberlain, the Western Australian Government promised to submit an Enabling Bill to Parliament when it assembled on 17th May, but New Zealand finally broke off negotiations. As regards the question of appeal to the Privy Council, the Premiers replied defending the provisions of the Bill; at the same time they expressed the opinion that postponement of consideration of the Bill by the Imperial authorities "would be much more objectionable to Australians generally *even* than amendment."

On 27th April the Australian delegates in London presented a second Memorandum to the Colonial Office, this time criticizing the system of Privy Council Appeals as well as the present constitution of the Privy Council in detail. After some further exchange of views without any advance towards agreement, the Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 14th May. A few days later, while the Bill was before the Commons, Chamberlain offered to substitute for the first paragraph of Clause 74 the following :

No question howsoever arising, as to the limits *inter se* of the Constitutional powers of the Commonwealth and those of any State or States, or as to the limits *inter se* of the Constitutional powers of any two or more States shall be capable of final decision except by the High Court, and no Appeal shall be permitted to the Queen in Council from any decision of the High Court on any such question unless by the consent of the Executive Government or Governments concerned, to be signified in writing by the Governor-General in the case of the Commonwealth, and by the Governor in the case of any State.

This compromise was accepted by four out of the six delegates, but when the text was telegraphed to Australia, it was objected, notably by Griffith, then Chief Justice of Queensland, that the right of appeal by a private suitor

should not be made to depend on the consent of the Executive, which was after all a non-judicial and political body. Criticism of the proposal became general throughout Australia, nor was it checked by a verbal improvement of the clause. These criticisms reached their mark, and, on 16th June 1900, Chamberlain announced that he proposed substituting the leave of the High Court of Australia for that of the Executive. This compromise was accepted as final, and the Bill, thus amended, passed through both Houses, receiving the Queen's assent on 9th July 1900; and it was appointed that the Commonwealth should come into being on 1st January 1901.

The five colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania were now committed to an indissoluble union. Western Australia alone stood out; but, in accordance with the undertaking given by Forrest to Chamberlain when the Australian delegates were in London, a special session of the Western Australian Parliament was called, and passed an Enabling Bill providing for a Referendum. The strength of the Federal sentiment in Western Australia was made manifest in the result of the voting, which, in spite of the financial loss to the colony which Federation threatened, showed a majority of two to one in favour of the Bill. The Referendum was taken on 31st July 1900, and the union of the Australian colonies was thus complete.

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